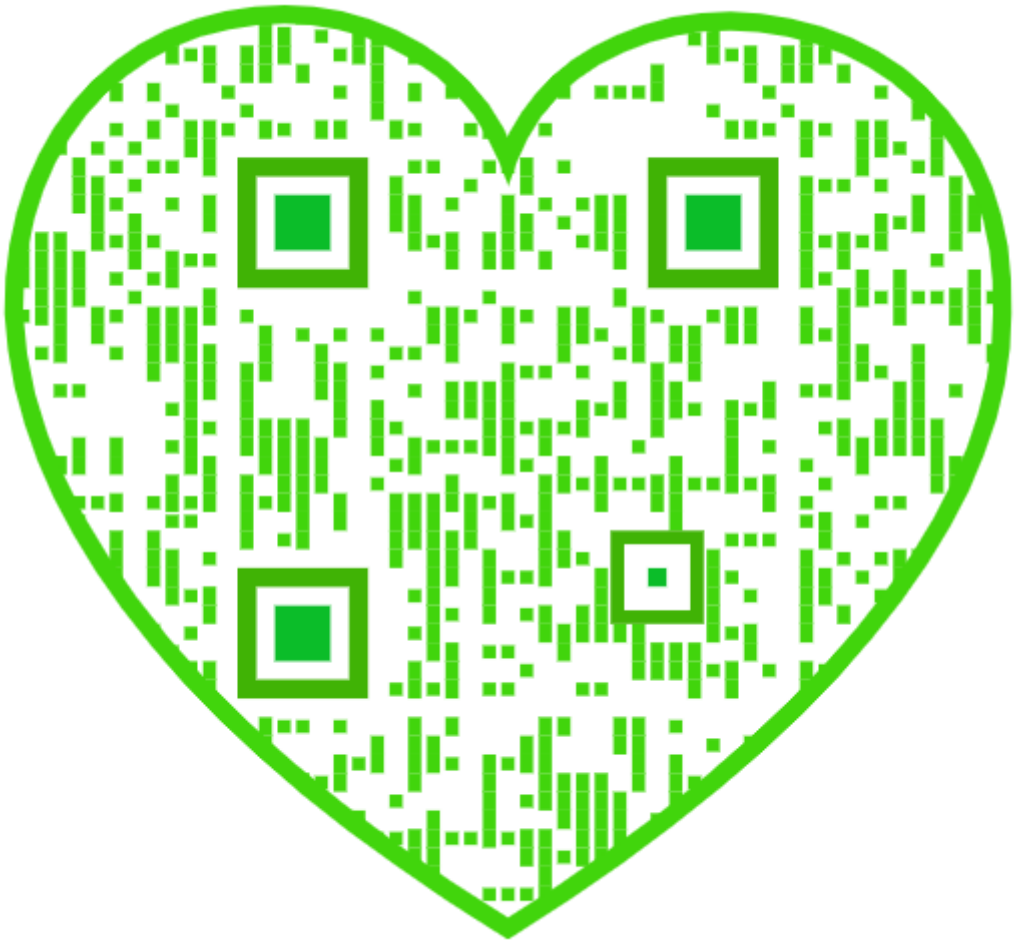

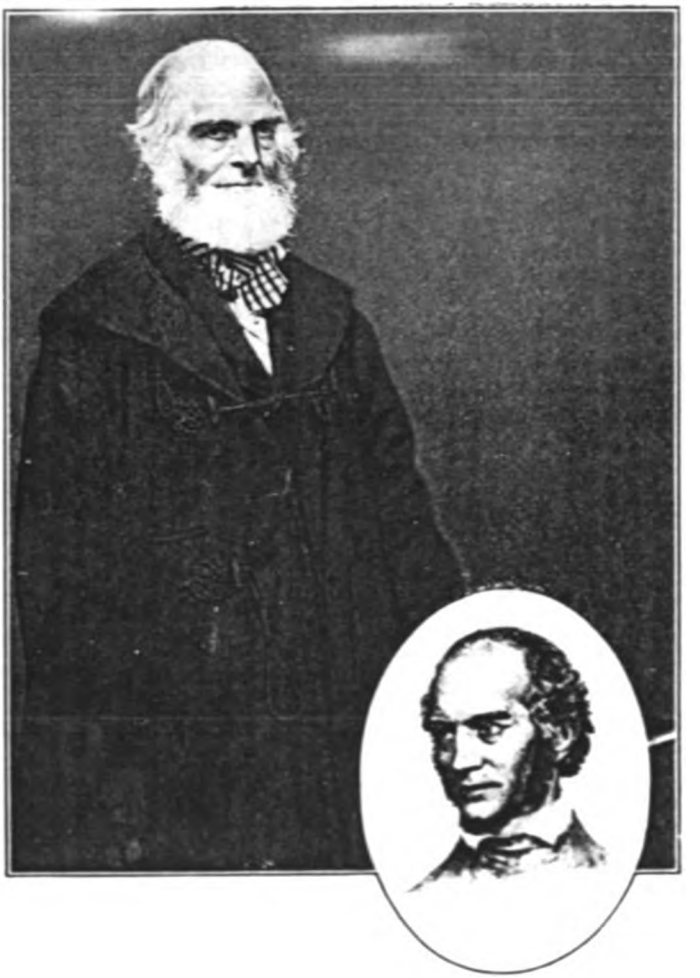

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT
Associate Editor, 1826-1829. Editor-in-Chief, 1829-1878

(Two hitherto unpublished portraits)

THE EVENING POST

A Century of Journalism

ALLAN NEVINS

The journalists are now the true kings and clergy; henceforth historians, unless they are fools, must write not of Bourbon dynasties, and Tudors, and Hapsburgs; but of stamped, broadsheet dynasties, and quite new successive names, according as this or the other able editor, or combination of able editors, gains the world's ear.—*Sartor Resartus.*

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PREFACE

This volume took its origin in the writer's belief that a history of the *Evening Post* would be interesting not merely as that of one of the world's greatest newspapers, but as throwing light on the whole course of metropolitan journalism in America since 1800, and upon some important parts of local and national history. In a book of this kind it is necessary to steer between Scylla and Charybdis. If the volume were confined to mere office-history, it would interest few; while a review of all the newspaper's editorial opinions and all the interesting news it has printed would be a review of the greater part of what has happened in the nineteenth century and since. The problem has been to avoid narrowness on the one hand, padding on the other. The author has tried to select the most important, interesting, and illuminating aspects and episodes of the newspaper's history, and to treat them with a careful regard for perspective.

The decision to include no footnote references to authorities in a volume of this character probably requires no defense. In a great majority of instances the text itself indicates the authority. When an utterance of the *Evening Post* on the Dred Scott decision is quoted, it would assuredly be impertinent to quote the exact date. The author wishes to say that he has been at pains to ascribe no bit of writing to a particular editor without making sure that he actually wrote it. When he names Bryant as the writer of a certain passage, he does so on the authority of the Bryant papers, or the Parke Godwin papers, or one of the lives of Bryant, or of indisputable internal evidence. After 1881 a careful record of the writers of the most important *Evening Post* editorials was kept in the files of the *Nation*.

The author wishes to thank the heirs of William Cullen Bryant, Parke Godwin, John Bigelow, Carl Schurz,

Horace White, Henry Villard, and E. L. Godkin for giving him access to a wealth of family papers. Important manuscript material bearing upon William Coleman was furnished by James Melvin Lee and Mary P. Wells Smith. He is under a heavy debt to Mr. Robert Bridges, editor of *Scribner's;* Mr. Norman Hapgood, editor of *Hearst's International Magazine;* Mr. H. J. Wright, editor of the *Globe;* Mr. Rollo Ogden, associate editor of the New York *Times;* Mr. O. G. Villard, editor of the *Nation;* Mr. Watson R. Sperry, of the Hartford *Courant;* Mr. Joseph Bucklin Bishop, Mr. Lincoln Steffens, Mr. R. R. Bowker, and Mr. Frederic Bancroft; the heirs of Charles Nordhoff and Charlton M. Lewis; and Mr. J. Ranken Towse, Mr. William Hazen, and Mr. Henry T. Finck of the *Evening Post,* for information and assistance. He is similarly obliged to the Library of Congress for aid in examining the papers of Alexander Hamilton and Carl Schurz. Portions of the manuscript were kindly read by Mr. Edwin F. Gay, president of the *Evening Post,* who has given constant advice and encouragement, Mr. Rollo Ogden, and Mr. Simeon Strunsky; and part of the proofs by Mr. Donald Scott, Mr. O. G. Villard, and Mr. H. J. Wright.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Hamilton and the Founding of the "Evening Post"	9
II.	The "Evening Post" as Leader of the Federalist Press	35
III.	The City and the "Evening Post's" Place in It	63
IV.	Literature and Drama in the Early "Evening Post"	96
V.	Bryant Becomes Editor	121
VI.	William Leggett Acting Editor: Depression, Rivalry, and Threatened Ruin	139
VII.	The Rise of the Slavery Question: the Mexican War	166
VIII.	New York Becomes a Metropolis: Central Park	192
IX.	Literary Aspects of Bryant's Newspaper, 1830-1855	207
X.	John Bigelow as an Editor of the "Evening Post"	228
XI.	Heated Politics Before the Civil War	242

CHAPTER		PAGE
XII.	THE NEW YORK PRESS AND SOUTHERN SECESSION	267
XIII.	THE CRITICAL DAYS OF THE CIVIL WAR	284
XIV.	RECONSTRUCTION AND IMPEACHMENT	326
XV.	BRYANT AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FAME AS EDITOR	338
XVI.	APARTMENT HOUSES RISE AND TWEED FALLS	364
XVII.	INDEPENDENCE IN POLITICS: THE ELECTIONS OF '72 AND '76	389
XVIII.	TWO REBEL LITERARY EDITORS	406
XIX.	WARFARE WITHIN THE OFFICE: PARKE GODWIN'S EDITORSHIP	420
XX.	THE VILLARD PURCHASE: CARL SCHURZ EDITOR-IN-CHIEF	438
XXI.	GODKIN, THE MUGWUMP MOVEMENT, AND GROVER CLEVELAND'S CAREER	458
XXII.	GODKIN'S WAR WITHOUT QUARTER UPON TAMMANY	476
XXIII.	OPPOSING THE SPANISH WAR AND SILVER CRAZE	496
XXIV.	CHARACTERISTICS OF A FIGHTING EDITOR: E. L. GODKIN	519
XXV.	NEWS, LITERATURE, MUSIC, AND DRAMA 1880-1900	546
XXVI.	HORACE WHITE, ROLLO OGDEN, AND THE "EVENING POST" SINCE 1900	568
	INDEX	581

ILLUSTRATIONS

William Cullen Bryant . . . . . *Frontispiece*
Associate Editor, 1826-1829, *Editor-in-Chief,* 1829-1878

FACING PAGE

Alexander Hamilton 26
Chief Founder of the "Evening Post"

William Coleman 102
Editor-in-Chief, 1801-1829

John Bigelow 264
Associate Editor, 1849-1860

Parke Godwin 440
Editor-in-Chief, 1878-1881

Henry Villard 440
Owner, 1881-1900

Carl Schurz 440
Editor-in-Chief, 1881-1883

Horace White 440
Associate Editor, 1881-1899, *Editor-in-Chief,* 1900-1903

E. L. Godkin 494
Associate Editor, 1881-1883, *Editor-in-Chief,* 1883-1899

Rollo Ogden 548
Editor-in-Chief, 1903-1920

Editorial Council, 1922 570

CHAPTER ONE

HAMILTON AND THE FOUNDING OF THE "EVENING POST"

OF all the newspapers established as party organs in the time when Federalists and Democrats were struggling for control of the government of the infant republic, but one important journal survives. It is the oldest daily in the larger American cities which has kept its name intact. The *Aurora,* the *Centinel,* the *American Citizen, Porcupine's Gazette,* whose pages the generation of Washington and Adams, Jefferson and Burr, scanned so carefully, are mere historical shades; but the *Evening Post,* founded in 1801 by Alexander Hamilton and a group of intimate political lieutenants, for the expression of Hamilton's views, remains a living link between that day of national beginnings and our own.

The spring of 1801, when plans were laid for issuing the *Evening Post,* was the blackest season the Federalists of New York had yet known. Jefferson was inaugurated as President on March 4, and the upper as well as the lower branch of Congress had now become Democratic. In April the State election was held, and the ticket headed by gouty old George Clinton won a sweeping victory over the Federalists, so that at Albany the Democrats took complete control; the Governorship, Legislature, and Council of Appointment were theirs. Many Federalists sincerely believed that the nation and State had been put upon the road to ruin. They were convinced that the party of Washington, Hamilton, and Adams, which had built up a vigorous republic out of a ramshackle Confederation, was the only party of construction; and that Democracy meant ruin to the public credit, aggressions by the States upon a weak central government, and national disintegration. Hamilton wrote Gouverneur

Morris after the election, in all seriousness, that the Constitution had become "a frail and worthless fabric."

For Hamilton himself, inasmuch as many of his own party deemed him responsible for the disaster which had overtaken it, the hour was doubly black. No other leader approached him in brilliance, but his genius was not unmixed with an erratic quality. He and John Adams, men of wholly different temperaments, tastes, and habits, had always instinctively disliked each other; and during Adams's Administration the latter had provoked an open breach with Hamilton, which meant a division of the Federalists into two factions. Hamilton, stung by Adams's hostility and in especial by the charge that he was too Anglophile to be patriotic, had so far lost control of himself as to commit a capital political blunder. He had written just before the election of 1800 a bitter analysis of "The Public Conduct and Character of John Adams," and though he designed this attack for confidential circulation only, it soon became public. The Democrats, their victory already assured, had made the most of it, and the resentment of Adams's adherents was intense. The party schism was widened when it fell to the House of Representatives early in 1801 to decide the tie for the Presidency between Jefferson and Burr. Of the two, Hamilton patriotically preferred Jefferson, and used his influence to persuade the Federalist Representatives to vote for him. But the New England Federalists, Adams's friends, opposed this view, and to Hamilton's disgust, all the New England States save Vermont went into Burr's column.

Hamilton gladly turned in April, 1801, from his preoccupation with politics to his law practice. Forty-three years old, with eight children and a wife to support, with no savings, and ambitious of building himself a country home on the upper part of Manhattan, he needed the $12,000 a year which he could earn at the city bar. When he thought of public affairs, he felt not tired—he was too intense for that—but chagrined, and misused. After all, the real causes of Adams's defeat were the

alien and sedition laws, the persecuting temper of the Administration, its hot and cold policy in dealing with French outrages, and Adams's vanity, caprice, and irascibility. But Hamilton by his pamphlet attack on the President had seriously damaged his own reputation for generalship. His friend, Robert Troup, wrote that this misstep had been most unfortunate. "An opinion has grown out of it, which at present obtains almost universally, that his character is radically deficient in discretion. Hence, he is considered as an unfit head of the party." Hamilton himself admitted, Troup says, "that his influence with the Federal party was wholly gone." He might well think of the assistance a newspaper would lend in defending himself from the Adams faction, restoring Federalist prestige, and attacking the triumphant Democrats.

Hamilton had many local companions in defeat, ready to support such a journal. Troup himself, and one other close friend, the cultivated merchant, William W. Woolsey, had been beaten for the Assembly. A general removal of Federalists from office followed the overturn. Though President Jefferson proved milder than had been feared, he made a number of changes, the most notable being that by which the wealthy Joshua Sands, with a store at 118 Pearl Street, lost the Collectorship of the Port. As for the new authorities at Albany, they were merciless. The Council of Appointment was dominated by young De Witt Clinton, the Governor's pushing nephew, and its guillotine worked night and day till every obnoxious head was off. In place of the tall and dignified Richard Varick, who had been one of Washington's secretaries, and to whose public spirit the American Bible Society, which he founded, is still a monument, it appointed Edward Livingston to be Mayor. In place of the scholarly Cadwallader Colden, it made Richard Riker the Attorney-General. Sylvanus Miller was brought down from Ulster to be Surrogate, and Ruggles Hubbard from Rensselaer to be Sheriff. The very Justiceships of the Peace were transferred. The

Clerkship of the Circuit Court whose jurisdiction covered the city was taken from William Coleman and given to John McKesson. A majority of the people of the city were Federalists, and they watched all these transfers with pain.

The local leaders, and especially Hamilton, had for some time been aware that they lacked an adequate newspaper organ. Three city journals, the *Daily Advertiser,* and the *Daily Gazette,* both morning publications, and the *Commercial Advertiser,* an evening paper, were Federalist in sympathy. But Snowden's *Daily Advertiser,* and Lang's *Gazette* were almost exclusively given up to commercial news; and while E. Belden's *Commercial Advertiser,* which still lives as the *Globe,* devoted some attention to politics, it lacked an able editor to write controversial articles. As the chief Democratic sheet remarked, "it is too drowsy to be of service in any cause; it is a powerful opiate." This Democratic sheet was the *American Citizen,* edited by the then noted English refugee and radical, James Cheetham. He was a slashing and fearless advocate of Jeffersonian principles, who daily filled from one to two columns with matter that set all the grocery and hotel knots talking. Some one as vigorous, but of better education and taste—Cheetham had once been a hatter —was needed to expound Hamiltonian doctrines.

It was hoped that this new editor and journal could give leadership and tone to the whole Federalist press, for a sad lack of vigor was evident from Maine to Charleston. The leading Federalist newspapers of the time, Benjamin Russell's *Columbian Centinel* in Boston, the *Courant* in Hartford, the *Gazette of the United States* in Philadelphia, and the Baltimore *Federal Gazette,* did not fully meet the wishes of energetic Federalists. Their conductors did not compare with the chief Democratic editors: James T. Callender, whom Adams had thrown into jail; Thomas Paine; B. F. Bache, Franklin's grandson; Philip Freneau, and William Duane. Some agency was needed to rouse them. They should

be helped with purse and pen, wrote John Nicholas, a leading Virginia Federalist, to Hamilton. "They seldom republish from each other, while on the other hand their antagonists never get hold of anything, however trivial in reality, but they make it ring through all their papers from one end of the continent to the other." In the summer of 1800 Hamilton called Oliver Wolcott's attention to libels printed by the Philadelphia *Aurora* upon prominent Federalists, and asked if these outrageous assaults could not be counteracted. "We may regret but we can not now prevent the mischief which these falsehoods produce," replied Wolcott.

The establishment of journals for party purposes had become, in the dozen years since the Constitution was ratified, a frequent occurrence, and no political leader knew more of the process than Hamilton. He had won his college education in New York by a striking article in a St. Kitts newspaper. No one needs to be reminded how in the Revolutionary crisis, when a stripling in Kings College, he had attracted notice by anonymous contributions to Holt's *Journal,* nor how in the equally important crisis of 1787-88 he published his immortal "Federalist" essays in the *Independent Journal.* Samuel Loudon, head of the *Independent Journal,* used to wait in Hamilton's study for the sheets as they came from his pen. To support Washington's Administration, Hamilton in 1789 encouraged John Fenno, a Boston schoolmaster of literary inclinations, to establish the *Gazette of the United States* at the seat of government; and in 1793, when Fenno appealed to Hamilton for $2,000 to save the journal from ruin, the latter took steps to raise the sum, making himself responsible for half of it. Hamilton also financially assisted William Cobbett, the best journalist of his time in England or America, to initiate his newspaper campaign against the Democratic haters of England. He, Rufus King, and others in New York helped provide the capital with which Noah Webster founded the *Minerva* in that city in 1793, and he and King together wrote for it a series of papers, signed

"Camillus," upon Jay's Treaty. If Hamilton's unsigned contributions to the Federalist press from 1790 to 1800 could be identified, they would form an important addition to his works.

It is evident from the published and unpublished papers of Hamilton that at an early date in 1801, when he was devoting all his spare time to the hopeless State campaign, he was giving thought to the problem of improving the party press. He wrote Senator Bayard of Delaware a letter upon party policy, to be presented at the Federalist caucus in Washington on April 20. In it he gave a prominent place to the necessity for "the diffusion of information," both by newspapers and by pamphlets. He added that "to do this a fund must be raised," and proposed forming an extensive association, each member who could afford it pledging himself to contribute $5 annually for eight years for publicity. Hamilton's fingers whenever he was in a tight place always itched for the pen. Noah Webster had withdrawn from the *Minerva* three years previous, while Fenno had died about the same time, leaving the *Gazette of the United States* to a son; so that Hamilton could no longer feel at home in these journals.

But if a Hamiltonian organ were started, who should be editor? Fortunately, this question was easily answered. To the party motives which Hamilton, Troup, Wolcott, and other leading Federalists had in setting up such a journal, at this juncture there was added a motive of friendship toward an aspirant for an editorial position. In 1798, there had been admitted to the New York bar a penniless lawyer of thirty-two from Greenfield, Massachusetts, named William Coleman. He had come with a record of two years' service in the Massachusetts House, an honorary degree from Dartmouth College, and warm recommendations from Robert Treat Paine, a signer of the Declaration of Independence who at this time was a judge of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. After a brief and unprofitable partnership with Aaron Burr, a

misstep which he later declared he should regret to his dying day, Coleman formed a partnership with John Wells, a brilliant young Federalist attorney. Wells was just the man to draw Coleman into intimacy with the Federalist leaders. He was a graduate of Princeton, a profound student of the law, was rated by good judges one of the three or four best speakers of the city, and was a member of the "Friendly Club," an important literary society. Governor John Jay offered him a Justiceship of the Peace, and Hamilton trusted him so much that, in 1802, he selected him to edit the first careful edition of *The Federalist,* for which Hamilton himself critically examined and revised the papers.

Through Wells, in 1798-99 Coleman came to know the members of the "Friendly Club," including W. W. Woolsey, the novelist Charles Brockden Brown, the dramatist William Dunlap, Anthony Bleecker, and James Kent, later Chancellor. He had already met Hamilton, on the latter's trip into New England in 1796, and now he fell completely under the great man's spell. In his later life he dated everything from the beginning of their friendship. The two had much in common besides their political views, for Coleman possessed a dashing temper, a quick mind, and a ready bonhomie. In the spring of 1800, there took place in New York the famous trial of Levi Weeks, charged with murdering Gulielma Sands, a young girl, and throwing her body into one of the Manhattan Company's wells; a trial in which Hamilton and Burr appeared together for the defense, and saved Weeks from conviction by a mass of circumstantial evidence. Coleman, a master of shorthand, immediately published a praiseworthy report of the trial. One of his political enemies admitted that "it is everywhere admired for its arrangement, perspicuity, and the soundness of judgment it displays." Coleman was encouraged to plan a volume of reports of decisions in the State Supreme Court. At that moment the Clerkship of the Circuit Court fell vacant. Hamilton at once wrote

Governor John Jay and also Ebenezer Foote, a member of the Council of Appointment, requesting that the place, which paid $3,000 a year, be given his friend Coleman. There was another candidate with a really superior claim, but he was passed by. Governor Jay announced the result in the following hitherto unpublished letter to Hamilton:

Mr. Coleman, who was yesterday appointed Clerk of the New York Circuit, will be the bearer of this. Mr. Skinner was first nominated—for where character and qualifications for office are admitted, the candidate whose age, standing, and prior public service is highest should, I think, take the lead; unless perhaps in cases peculiarly circumstanced.—Mr. Skinner did not succeed. Mr. Coleman was then nominated, and the Council, expecting much from his reports, and considering the office as necessary to enable him to accomplish that work, advised his appointment. Mr. Coleman's embarrassments, and whatever appeared to me necessary to observe respecting the candidates, were mentioned antecedent to the nomination. My feelings were in Coleman's favor, and had my judgment been equally so, he would have suffered less anxiously than he has. I mentioned your opinion in his favor; and I wish the appointment may be generally approved. Ten or eleven of the members recommended Mr. Skinner—some of them will not be pleased.

I hope Mr. Coleman will be attentive to the reports. Much expectation has been excited, and disappointment would produce disgust. It is, I think, essential to him that the work be prosecuted with diligence, but not with haste; and that they may be such as they already hope.

But in the general overturn of 1801, Coleman—who had duly commenced the compilation of the Supreme Court Law Reports, beginning with 1794, and whose labors later bore fruit in what is called Coleman and Caines's Reports—lost his post. He could have resumed practice with Wells, who also lost his justiceship in the ten-pound court. But the bar was overcrowded, having about a hundred members in a city of 60,000, and Coleman had starved at it before. While a lawyer in Greenfield, he had established the first newspaper there, the *Impartial Intelligencer*, and had written for it, and

he had then half formed an ambition to conduct a newspaper in New York. Far from having any money of his own, he had been left deep in debt by his participation in the unfortunate Yazoo speculation in Georgia lands. But he knew that the party leaders were thinking of the need for a better Federalist newspaper, and he stepped forward to offer his assistance in establishing one.

During the spring Coleman was busy campaigning for Stephen Van Rensselaer, Federalist candidate for Governor, who happened to be Hamilton's brother-in-law, and for the Assembly ticket. The *American Citizen* repeatedly commented on his activity; on April 22, it predicted that this "seller of two-pence halfpenny pamphlets, this sycophantic messenger of Gen. Hamilton . . . will at one time or another receive a due reward." During probably May and June, in consultations among Hamilton, Wells, Mayor Varick, Troup, Woolsey, a Commissioner of Bankruptcy named Caleb S. Riggs, and Coleman, the plan of the *Evening Post* was drafted. Woolsey had married a sister of Theodore Dwight, the editor of the *Connecticut Courant* at Hartford, and wished Dwight placed in charge, but he finally acquiesced in entrusting the new enterprise to Coleman.

A founders' list was secretly circulated among trusty Federalists, and signers were expected to contribute a minimum of $100. The initial capital required was probably not much in excess of $10,000. A Baltimore newspaper, the *Anti-Democrat,* was established at this time by Judge Samuel Chase, Robert Goodloe Harper, and other Federalists, for $8,000. Hamilton's adherents, who included almost the whole commercial group of New York, were wealthy; and Hamilton himself, liberal to a fault with his large income, probably offered not less than $1,000. Besides the names already listed, we know of some other men who contributed, as the merchant, Samuel Boyd, and the dismissed Collector, Joshua Sands. Coleman told the poet Bryant, his successor, that Archibald Gracie, one of the richest and most dignified merchants, had assisted, and a tradition in the family

has it that the *Evening Post* was founded at a meeting in the Gracie home. The *American Citizen* of the time declares that a certain auctioneer—perhaps Leonard Bleecker, perhaps the elder Philip Hone, perhaps James Byrne—"contributed largely." These men did not present the money outright, but vested the property in Coleman, who gave his notes in return; unfortunately, he was never able to meet them, and before 1810 all his American creditors, as one of his friends states in a letter of that year, "signed his discharge without receiving anything." The project was rapidly matured. "In a moment thousands of dollars were raised," wrote Cheetham. During the summer of 1801 a fine brick office was made ready on Pine Street, and about the beginning of November would-be readers were asked to enter their subscriptions.

The initial subscribers numbered about 600, and among the names entered in the journal's first account book, which was unfortunately lost years ago, were the following:

Daniel D. Tompkins, 1 Wall Street
John Jacob Astor, 71 Liberty Street
Garrett H. Striker, 181 Broadway
Henry Doyer, Bowery Lane
Anthony Lispenard, 19 Park Street
Strong Sturges, 13 Oliver Street
Anthony Bleecker, 25 Water Street
Joel and Jonathan Post, Wall and William Streets
Isaac Haviland, 186 Water Street
John McKesson, 82 Broadway
Matthew Clarkson, 26 Pearl Street
Nathaniel L. Sturges, 47 Wall Street
Philip Livingston, Yonkers
Philip Hone, 56 Dey Street
R. Belden, 153 Broadway
Col. Barclay, 142 Greenwich Street
John Cruger, 30 Greenwich Street
Anthony Dey, 19 Cedar Street
Robert Morris, 33 Water Street
Robert Thorne, 2 Coenties slip

Isaac Ledyard, 2 Pearl Street
James Carter, 195 Greenwich Street
Cornelius Bogert, 24 Pine Street
Grant Thorburn, 22 Nassau Street
Philip L. Jones, 74 Broadway
Robert Swarthout, 62 Water Street

In the first issue, Nov. 16, 1801, appeared a prospectus which may have been written by Coleman alone, but is more likely the product of his collaboration with Hamilton. Every reader looked first to see what was said of party affairs. The editor promised to support Federalism, but without dogmatism or intolerance; he declared his belief "that honest and virtuous men are to be found in each party"; and he made it clear that the columns would always be open to communications from Democrats. Merchants were assured that special attention would be paid to whatever affected them, and that the earliest commercial information, which in those days meant chiefly arrivals and sailings of ships, would be obtained. Newspaper exchanges, and current pamphlets, magazines, and reviews would be searched for whatever was most informing and entertaining. Letter-writers were asked not to enclose their names, a bad rule which Coleman soon found it expedient to abrogate. Prominent in the prospectus was the paragraph still carried at the head of the *Evening Post's* editorial columns:

> The design of this paper is to diffuse among the people correct information on all interesting subjects, to inculcate just principles in religion, morals, and politics; and to cultivate a taste for sound literature.

An effort was actually for a time made to teach religious truths. In an early issue a letter was printed, probably from some cleric, combating certain atheistic views expressed by Cheetham's *American Citizen;* an editorial article soon after was devoted to a discussion of the Revelation of St. John; and Coleman never tired of attacking the deism of local "illuminati."

In its opening sentences the prospectus stated that the

journal would appear in a dress worthy of the liberal patronage promised. To modern eyes the first volumes are cramped, dingy, and uninviting. Each issue consisted of a single sheet folded once, to make four pages, as continued to be the case until the middle eighties; a page measured only 14 by 19½ inches; and the conventional cuts of ships, houses, stoves, furniture, and coiffures would be disfiguring if they were not quaint. But when we compare the *Evening Post* with its contemporaries we see that the statement was not empty. Editor Callender remarked that "This newspaper is, beyond all comparison, the most elegant piece of workmanship that we have seen, either in Europe or America." The *Gazette of the United States* commented that it was published "in a style by far superior to that of any other newspaper in the United States." How could it afford this style? it asked. Advertisements were the secret, for out of twenty columns, fourteen or fifteen were always filled with the patronage of Federalist merchants. Few journals then had more than two full fonts of type, and some were set entirely in minion. Coleman and his printer, a young man from Hartford named Michael Burnham, had started with four full fonts of new type beautifully cut; they used a superior grade of paper; and the arrangement and use of headings had been carefully studied. Dignity was then, as always later, emphasized.

Every Saturday a weekly edition, called the *Herald*, was sent to distant subscribers, from Boston to Savannah, with fewer advertisements and at least twice the reading matter. Noah Webster, in conducting the *Minerva*, had been the first New York editor to perceive the economy and profit in publishing such a journal "for the country" without recomposition of type, and had himself used the name *Herald*. The New York Federalists relied principally upon the weekly for a national diffusion of their views, and with reason, for at an early date in 1802 the circulation rose above 1600, as against slightly more than 1100 for the *Evening Post* itself. These were respectable figures for that time.

What should the Federalist chieftains, Hamilton, Wolcott, King, Gouverneur Morris, and others, make of these two instruments? To answer this, we shall have to look first at the qualifications of "Hamilton's editor," as other journals called him.

The abilities of Coleman, an interesting type of the best Federalist editor, were as great as those of any other American journalist of the time. His formal training was unusually good for a day in which powerful figures like Duane, Cheetham, Binns, and Callender were comparatively uncultivated men, who wrote with vigor but without polish or even grammatical correctness. Born in Boston on Feb. 14, 1766, he was fortunate enough to be sent to Phillips Andover, the first incorporated academy in New England, soon after it opened in 1778. Though he was a poor boy, he had for fellow-pupils the sons of the best families of the region, including Josiah Quincy, the future mayor of Boston and president of Harvard; and for "preceptor" the famous Eliphalet Pearson, a master of the harsh type of Keate of Eton or Dr. Busby of Westminster. Here he gained "a certain elegance of scholarship" in Greek and Latin which, Bryant tells us, "was reckoned among his qualifications as a journalist." He formed a taste for reading, and his editorials bear evidence of his knowledge of all the standard English authors—Shakespeare, Milton, Hume, Johnson, Fielding, Smollett, and the eighteenth-century poets and essayists. Sterne was a favorite with him, and like all other editors, he knew the "Letters of Junius" almost by heart. Most Phillips Andover boys went on to Harvard, but Coleman began the study of law in the office of Robert Treat Paine, then Attorney-General of Massachusetts, at Worcester. Nothing is known of his life there save that he became an intimate friend of the Rev. Aaron Bancroft, father of the historian George Bancroft; and that he dropped his books to serve in the winter march of the militia in 1786 against Shays.

Bryant knew Coleman only in his declining years, but he tells us that he was "of that temperament which some

physiologists call the sanguine." Hopefulness and energy were fully evinced in the decade he spent at the bar in Greenfield, Hampshire County, from 1788 to the end of 1797. He practiced across the Vermont and New Hampshire lines, made money, showed marked public spirit, and seemed destined to be more than a well-to-do squire—to be one of the dignitaries of northwest Massachusetts. The newspaper which he founded at Greenfield early in 1792, but did not edit, prospered, and under a changed name is now the third oldest surviving newspaper in the State. In the same year Coleman set on foot a subscription for the town's first fire-engines. He was active in a movement, which many years later succeeded, to divide Hampshire County; he set out many of the fine street-elms; and in 1796 he was one incorporator of a company to pipe water into the town. He began training young men to the bar in his own office. In the Presidential campaign of 1796 he made many speeches, and his political activity was further exemplified by terms in the Massachusetts House in 1795 and 1796. He was only thirty years old when in September of the latter year he received his honorary degree at Dartmouth. When he invested his money in the Yazoo Purchase, he believed that he would make a fortune—a Greenfield contemporary says that he estimated his profits at $30,000. In the flush of this delusion, he married, and bought a spacious site in the town with a fine view of the Pocumtuck Hills and Green River Valley, where he commenced the erection of a house now regarded as one of the finest specimens of Colonial architecture in the section.

The disaster which overtook Coleman when, at the close of 1796, the Georgia Legislature annulled the Yazoo Purchase on the ground that it had been effected by corruption, he faced without flinching. It was natural for him, on settling his affairs in 1797, to seek his fortune in New York. We find it stated by a journalistic opponent that he had received promises of help from "Mr. Burr and other leading characters." At any rate, his first partnership, which he later lamented as "the greatest

error of my life," was with Burr, who had just ended his term in the United States Senate. Coleman later wrote that his share of the office receipts "came essentially short of affording me a subsistence." One other man destined to be a famous Federalist editor, Theodore Dwight, had previously had a similar partnership with Burr and had dissolved it. Coleman did better when he joined his fortunes first with Francis Arden, and then with John Wells. But he was still desperately poor, and his creditors pressed him. Among those whom he owed money were Gen. Stephen R. Bradley, of Westminster, Vt., later a United States Senator, and a friend of Bradley's, Edward Houghton; these two brought suit, and on Jan. 27, 1801, obtained judgments in a New York court, the former for $691.71, the latter for $443.67.

Yet under these trying circumstances Coleman's amiable deportment, frankness, and activity made him well-wishers among the best men of the city. He was of athletic frame, and at this time of robust appearance; with curling hair and sparkling eyes, he was a figure to attract attention anywhere. "His manners were kind and courteous," says Bryant; "he expressed himself in conversation with fluency, energy, and decision"; and his enemy Cheetham testifies that "no man knew better how to get into the good graces of everybody better than himself." Resolving to demonstrate to the bar the utility of accurate reports of all important cases and decisions, he spared no labor or pains upon his report of the trial of Levi Weeks; for this little volume of ninety-eight pages he collated five other notebooks with his own.

In all, Coleman was well fitted to become the leading Federalist editor of the nation. The *Evening Post* was expected by the party chieftains to take a prompt and vigorous stand on every great public question, and to voice an opinion which lesser journals could echo. It was a heavy responsibility. "The people of America derive their political information chiefly from newspapers," wrote Callender in 1802. "Duane upon one side, and Coleman upon the other, dictate at this moment the

sentiments of perhaps fifty thousand American citizens." When in 1807 the first journal of the party was established at the new capital, Jonathan Findley's Washington *Federalist,* its founder, after enumerating all the requisites of an editor, named Coleman as their foremost exemplar. "I cannot, in the field of controversy, vie with a Coleman." In the summer of 1802 Coleman was nicknamed the "Field-marshal of the Federal Editors" by his opponent Callender, and the fitting appellation stuck.

Wielding a ready pen, Coleman was apt in literary allusions. His knowledge of law enabled him to write with authority upon legislation, constitutional questions, and practical politics. Unlike his successor Bryant, he mingled freely with men in places of public resort, and kept his ear to the ground. He took an interest in letters and the drama which was quite unknown to other "political editors." Some pretensions to being an authority upon style he always asserted, and he never tired of correcting the errors of Democratic scribblers. Against certain expressions he made a stubborn battle—for example, against "averse from" instead of "averse to," and against "over a signature" instead of "under" it; in 1814 he offered $100 for every instance of the last-named phrase in a good author since Clarendon. He was excessively generous, always ready to lend his ear to a pitiful story; Dr. John W. Francis relates that his eyes would moisten over the woes of one of the paper-boys. This kindliness made the columns of the *Evening Post* always open to charitable or reformative projects. Coleman's chief faults were three. His style, like Hamilton's, was diffuse; he sometimes forgot taste and decency in assailing his opponents; and he was a wretched business man. A few years after the journal was founded its money affairs fell into such embarrassment that friends intervened, and an arrangement was made by which Michael Burnham, the printer, became half owner, with entire control of the finances.

II

Contemporary writers from 1801 to 1904, however, seldom spoke of the *Evening Post* as Coleman's newspaper; it was usually "Hamilton's journal" or "Hamilton's gazette." Just so had Freneau's *National Gazette* a decade before been called "Jefferson's journal," so Cheetham's *American Citizen* was now sometimes called "Clinton's journal," and there was even "Levi Lincoln's journal," the Worcester *National Aegis,* which Attorney-General Lincoln helped support. During 1801 Burr and his partisans were much dissatisfied with Cheetham's newspaper, and this dissatisfaction came to a head after the spring elections the following year. A group which included Burr, John Swartwout, W. P. Van Ness, Col. William S. Smith, and John Sanford established a paper called the New York *Morning Chronicle,* and after offering the editorship to Charles Holt, who refused, gave it to Washington Irving's brother, Dr. Peter Irving, known for his tea-table talents and effeminate manners as "Miss Irving." The *Chronicle* was of course for several years called "Burr's journal." Just how close was Hamilton's connection, never openly avowed, with the *Evening Post?*

The most direct evidence on the subject outside of newspaper files of the period is furnished by the autobiography of Jeremiah Mason, a native of Connecticut, who practiced law in Vermont and New Hampshire alongside Coleman, and became a United States Senator from the latter State. He writes of Coleman:

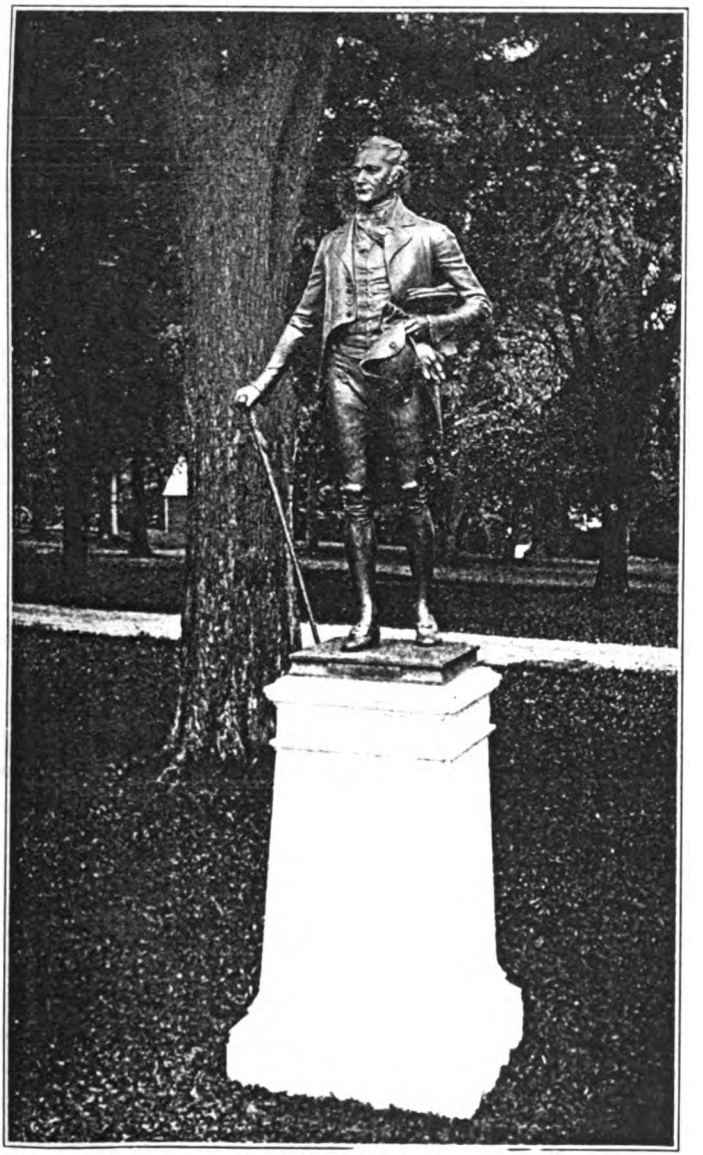
> As a lawyer he was respectable, but his chief excellence consisted in a critical knowledge of the English language, and the adroit management of political discussion. His paper for several years gave the leading tone to the press of the Federal party. His acquaintances were often surprised by the ability of some of his editorial articles, which were supposed to be beyond his depth. Having a convenient opportunity, I asked him who wrote, or aided in writing, those articles. He frankly answered that he made no secret of it; that his paper was set up under the auspices of

General Hamilton, and that he assisted him. I then asked, "Does he write in your paper?"—"Never a word."—"How, then, does he assist?"—His answer was, "Whenever anything occurs on which I feel the want of information I state matters to him, sometimes a note; he appoints a time when I may see him, usually a late hour in the evening. He always keeps himself minutely informed on all political matters. As soon as I see him, he begins in a deliberate manner to dictate and I to note down in shorthand; when he stops, my article is completed."

There is ample corroboratory proof that Hamilton contributed much to the opinions and expression of the *Evening Post,* and there is every reason to believe that this is the way he frequently did it. Coleman could readily have taken the dictation in shorthand. Seldom in the thirty-two months between the founding of the *Evening Post* and the death of Hamilton could the General have found time for deliberate writing. He had one of the largest law practices in the country, and he was the leader of a great party, regarded by a majority of Federalists as the dashing strategist who would yet perhaps make them as powerful as in the days of Washington. Yet that energetic fighter could not be kept out of the columns.

"Those only who were his intimate friends," wrote Coleman in 1816, "know with what readiness he could apply the faculties of his illuminated mind." No doubt Coleman resorted for guidance on many nights to Hamilton's home at 26 Broadway—the editor's house was a few blocks distant, at 61 Hudson Street—and on not a few week-ends to his country residence, called "The Grange" after the ancestral Hamilton estate in Scotland, which stood on Kingsbridge Road at what is now the corner of 142d Street and Tenth Avenue.

From 1801 to 1804 only a single bit of signed writing from Hamilton's pen appeared in the *Evening Post.* This was a communication denying the hoary legend, originally circulated in derogation of Washington and Lafayette, that at Yorktown Lafayette had ordered Hamilton to put to death all British prisoners in the redoubt which he was sent forward to capture, and that he had declined



ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Chief Founder of the *Evening Post.*

(The Hamilton College Statue)

to obey the inhumane command. But a much more important contribution was hardly concealed. This was a series of articles upon President Jefferson's first annual message, written under the signature "Lucius Crassus," and published irregularly from Dec. 17, 1801, till April 8, 1802. They were eighteen in all, and not equal to Hamilton's best work. At one time the series was interrupted by a trip of Hamilton's to Albany, but the editor explained the delay by saying that he was waiting to let the distant journals copying the series catch up with back installments. Before their publication was quite completed in the *Evening Post,* Coleman issued them in a neat pamphlet of 127 pages, with an introduction by himself, for 50 cents.

All other contributions must be sought for upon internal evidence, and such evidence can never be conclusive. No one is yet certain who wrote some of the essays of "The Federalist," and it is impossible to point to unsigned papers in the *Evening Post* and say, "These are Hamilton's." The style might be that of almost any other cultivated man of legal training; the content might be that of such other able contributors as Gouverneur Morris or Oliver Wolcott. It is possible that a long, well-written article of March 12, 1802, upon Representative Giles's speech for the repeal of the Judiciary Act is Hamilton's; it contains a good deal of information upon the proposals which Hamilton made for indirect taxation when he was Secretary of the Treasury. It is possible that Hamilton dictated part or all of the attack of April 19, 1803, upon the Manhattan Bank founded by De Witt Clinton's faction, for it contains much sound disquisition upon the principles of public finance. It is quite possible that he furnished at least an outline for the article of July 9, 1803, upon neutrality, which deals in considerable part with the rôle he, Knox, and Jefferson played in the Genet affair; and that he assisted later the same month in an article upon the funding system, land tax, and national debt. But it is bootless to pile up such conjectures. The editorials upon the diplomatic aspects of the Louisiana

treaty, the Chase impeachment, and the navigation of the Mississippi certainly represented Hamilton's views.

There is abundant evidence that Coleman wished to do Hamilton personal as well as political service in the *Evening Post*. His first opportunity to do this occurred less than ten days after the founding of the journal, when on Nov. 24, 1801, it announced the death of Philip, Hamilton's eldest and most promising son—"murdered," said the editor, "in a duel." The attendant circumstances were obscure, and Coleman spared no labor to inquire into them and set them forth accurately and tactfully, correcting the accounts in the Democratic press. It appeared that Philip Hamilton, a youth of twenty, was sitting with another young man in a box at a performance of Cumberland's "The West Indian," and that they exchanged some jocose remarks upon a Fourth of July oration made the previous summer by one George I. Eacker, a Democrat. Eacker overheard them, called them into the lobby, said that he would not be "insulted by a set of rascals," and scuffled with them. The two excitable boys challenged him. Young Hamilton's companion fought first, Sunday morning on the Weehawken dueling-ground, and no one was injured. On Monday afternoon the second duel occurred. "Hamilton received a shot through the body at the first discharge," reported the *Evening Post*, "and fell without firing. He was brought across the ferry to his father's house, where he languished of the wound until this morning [Tuesday], when he expired." Coleman took occasion to utter a shrewd warning against dueling. "Reflections on this horrid custom must occur to every friend of humanity; but the voice of an individual or the press must be ineffectual without additional, strong, and pointed legislative interference. Fashion has placed it upon a footing which nothing short of this can control." The truth of this statement had a melancholy illustration within three years.

Coleman also contradicted in detail, using information which Hamilton alone could have furnished, a spiteful story to the effect that President Washington, when

Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury, used to send him public papers with the request, "Dear Hamilton, put this into style for me," and that Hamilton boasted of the service. Again, Coleman assured his readers, using more information from Hamilton, that the letters which Jefferson wrote as Secretary of State to the British Minister, George Hammond, upon the debts owed to the British, were given their finishing touches by Hamilton.

When Cheetham and other Clintonians charged Hamilton with having procured Burr a large loan at the Manhattan Bank—some Democrats were always sniffing a coalition between the Federalists and the Burrites—Coleman placed the story in the ridiculous light it deserved. However, he steadily refused to dignify the many grosser slanders uttered against Hamilton by any notice. After the statesman's death, the editor repeatedly delivered utterances which he said he had "from Hamilton's own lips," some of them upon matters of great importance; for example, upon the rôle which Madison played in the Federal Convention. Coleman in his later years also professed to be an authority upon the authorship of the "Federalist." It appears from the *Evening Post* files that Senator Lodge, the editor of Hamilton's works, is mistaken in believing Coleman the editor of the 1802 edition of that volume—that John Wells edited it; but Coleman took a keen interest in its publication.

"It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Coleman, in difficult cases, consults with Mr. Hamilton," Cheetham observed in 1802. "Editors *must* consult superior minds; it is their business to draw information from the purest and correctest sources." Coleman never denied such statements. In the summer of 1802 the Baltimore *American* remarked that the *Evening Post* was "said to be directly under the controul of Alexander Hamilton." The editor rejoined that it was "unnecessary to answer him whether the *Evening Post* is so much honoured as to be under the influence of General Hamilton or not," and went on to imply distinctly that it was. Callender referred to Coleman as "Hamilton's typographer." It

is worth noting that when Charles Pinckney, leader of the South Carolina Federalists, found that the weekly *Herald* was not being regularly received by the Charleston subscribers, he wrote in expostulation not to Coleman but to Hamilton, asking him to speak to the editor.

Upon the *Evening Post,* as upon the Federalist party, the tragic death of Hamilton fell as a stunning blow. Announcing the calamity on June 13, 1804, Coleman added that "as soon as our feelings will permit, we shall deem it a duty to present a sketch of the character of our ever-to-be lamented patron and best friend." The press of the nation looked to him. The best report, said the Fredericktown (Md.) *Herald,* a Federalist sheet, "is expected in the *Evening Post* of Mr. Coleman, than whom no man perhaps out of the weeping and bereft family of his illustrious friend can more fervently bewail the loss." On the day of the funeral the *Evening Post* was suspended, the only time in its history that it missed an issue because of a death, and for a week all its news columns carried heavy black borders. Unfortunately, the editor did not redeem his promise of a character sketch, professing himself too deeply grieved. After devoting a month to discussion of the duel and its causes, he turned from "the most awful and afflicting subject that ever occupied my mind and weighed down my heart"; he could write no more "of him whom I can never cease to mourn as the best of friends, and the greatest and most virtuous of men."

Hamilton's family and associates wished a volume compiled from the various tributes to his memory, and by Mrs. Hamilton's express wish, the task was entrusted to Coleman. Before the end of the year he published it with the title of "Facts and Documents Relative to the Death of Major-General Hamilton"; a careful and tasteful work which not many years ago was reissued in expensive form. There was some talk then and later of a more ambitious commission. Thus in 1809 the Providence *American,* deploring the fact that no biography of Hamilton had yet appeared, suggested that Coleman was

"the only person qualified." The editor, however, responded that a gentleman of more leisure, by whom he meant the Rev. John M. Mason, had already accepted the undertaking.

Yet the death of its great patron and mentor detracted less from the vigor of the *Evening Post* in controversy than might have been supposed. Coleman from the beginning had been assisted not only by Hamilton but by a half-dozen of the ablest New Yorkers of Hamiltonian views. Gouverneur Morris was in the United States Senate until 1803, but Duane of the *Aurora* declares that he found time to contribute to the new journal. It is not unlikely that three admirably written articles upon the peace of Amiens, in the last month of 1801, were by him; the first gave a survey of European affairs, the second considered the effects of the peace upon American business, and the third dealt with its effect upon American parties. In 1807 he was still writing, for Coleman later revealed the authorship of two articles he then sent in upon the Beaumarchais claims. Oliver Wolcott was a Federal judge when the *Evening Post* was established, and later entered business in New York. He also contributed from time to time, though after Hamilton's death he was gradually converted from Federalism to Democracy. In 1807 he offered Coleman a long editorial article signed "Camillus." As Coleman ruefully said later, he was "a man of whose political as well as personal rectitude I then entertained so little suspicion that I should have delivered any article by him directly to the compositor without even reading it"; and the editor had it published without carefully examining it. Its views were so heretical to Federalists that in 1814 the Democrats were still tauntingly reprinting it, and Coleman was still speaking of the episode with pain.

According to Cheetham, the able merchant, W. W. Woolsey, whose grandson, Theodore Winthrop, lives in our literature, appeared now and then in the columns of the newspaper he had helped found. Ebenezer Foote, the former State Senator and member of the Council of

Appointment, who had helped Coleman obtain his clerkship of the Circuit Court, contributed signed articles. Rufus King, when he finished his service as Minister to England in 1803, lent a valuable hand, and as late as 1819 we find him advising Coleman as to the proper editorial treatment of the Florida question. The editor came to know him sufficiently well to give an intimate character sketch of him in *Delaplaine's Repository*, a magazine of the day. Almost indispensable help was lent by Coleman's old partner, John Wells, who at times acted as virtual associate editor, and took charge of the journal during occasional absences of Coleman. Wells had a taste for literature and the drama as well as politics, but, says Coleman, "he dealt chiefly in the didactic and the severe."

Of the counsel and assistance of these prominent Federalists Coleman was proud, but he keenly resented any imputation that he was their mere tool and mouthpiece. This accusation was made by Cheetham when the *Evening Post* was not a year old:

> Mr. Coleman says that to pay a man for writing against the late Administration was a crime. He will allow that the application of the rule will be just when applied to the present Administration. We then say that Mr. Coleman receives the wages of sin; for he is in every sense of the word paid for writing *against* the present Administration. The establishment at the head of which he is, is said not to be his *own;* it is said to belong to a company, of which General Hamilton is one. The paper was commenced for the avowed purpose of opposing the Administration. Mr. Coleman, it is believed, receives a yearly salary for writing for it, and for his wages he is bound to write against the Administration, whether the sentiments he pens accord with his own or not. He runs no risk, he has no responsibility upon his shoulders. He may, in fact, be called a mere hireling.

Coleman replied:

> Cheetham says that the establishment of the *Evening Post* does not belong to the editor, but to a company, of which General Hamilton is one; and that the editor receives a yearly salary for writing for it. Now, though we do not perceive that this is of

much consequence in any way but to the editor's pocket . . . we shall not permit it to pass uncontradicted. We therefore declare that *not one word of it is true.* The establishment of the *Evening Post* is, and always since its commencement has been, the sole property of the editor: it does not, nor did it ever, belong to a company, or to General Hamilton, or to any one else but the editor; and lastly, the editor is not a *hireling,* nor has he at any period of his life received *wages for writing.*

Not at all discomfited, the Jeffersonian organ remarked —and hit near the truth—that the journal had probably been given to Coleman by the men who were known to have raised large sums to found it. Certainly Coleman until after 1804 was hardly a free agent. The distinction and prosperity of his newspaper depended largely upon Hamilton's good will. He gladly served the statesman whom he called "my best earthly friend, my ablest adviser, and my most generous and disinterested patron," but he had no real alternative.

Hamilton bequeathed to the *Evening Post* certain principles which guided it for years to come. The Federalist party in the nation at large gradually crumbled away, but fortunately for the *Evening Post,* it remained powerful in New York city until near 1820. Until the close of the second war with England, a majority of the people of the city held Hamiltonian views. The primary object of Hamilton was to establish a strong national sovereignty, victorious over all forms of disintegration. His financial policy, which embraced insistence upon sound money, and adequate revenues without dependence either upon the States or Europe, was made effective while he was head of the treasury. The commercial policy which he favored was one which would develop manufacturing, by a judicious protective tariff, to a parity with agriculture, and make the nation self-sufficient. In foreign affairs, he wished the United States to steer clear of European intrigue, and as he feared French influence more than British, he tended to be more sympathetic toward England. The *Evening Post* hence steadfastly opposed extreme State Rights ideas, even when some New Eng-

land Federalists asserted them in the War of 1812. It never ceased quoting Hamilton on financial questions, and its recollection of his tariff views delayed a firm opposition to protection until Bryant took the helm. It opposed the identification of America with either party in the Napoleonic struggle, but for a variety of reasons it supported Great Britain.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVENING POST AS LEADER OF THE FEDERALIST PRESS

EDITORIAL pages of a century ago bore no resemblance to those of to-day. Sometimes no editorial at all would be printed; sometimes only a few scrappy paragraphs; sometimes two thousand words at once. Coleman was no less addicted than others to those series of numbered editorials which, dragging their slow length along from day to day, disappeared with Henry Watterson. This was the hey-day of the pamphlet, and it did not occur to most newspaper conductors that they could state an opinion on an important national event in fewer than several issues. Thus just after the *Evening Post* was founded, while Hamilton's eighteen articles upon Jefferson's message were being slowly run off, six other long editorial articles were sandwiched upon the repeal of certain discriminatory duties. The public had hardly finished digesting them when there ensued six upon the Georgia cession to the United States. They were followed by a series of twelve upon Jefferson and Callender. Frequently no effort was made to give unity to the single instalment, which began and ended abruptly. A good many of these long and ponderous editorials of Jeffersonian days would have been soporific had they not made up in shrillness what they lacked in liveliness.

Our third President and the *Evening Post* stepped upon the stage almost simultaneously. "Hamilton's gazette," said travelers from the South, was to be seen at Monticello; while the *Evening Post* followed Jefferson with steady hostility as he came forward to play his part, in the words of a description in its meager news columns:

Dressed in long boots, with tops turned down about the ankles, like a Virginian buck; overalls of corduroy, faded by frequent

immersions in soapsuds from a yellow to a dull white; a red, single-breasted waistcoat; a light brown coat with brass buttons, both coat and waistcoat quite threadbare; linen very considerably soiled; hair uncombed and beard unshaven.

Coleman's most unjustifiable display of party animosity occurred when his promise of fairness in the *Evening Post's* prospectus was still fresh in men's minds. In the summer of 1802 he reprinted from the Richmond *Recorder* the treacherous Callender's attack upon the personal morals of the President, arousing a storm of protest. Much of this storm fell upon the head of Hamilton, and on Sept. 29 Coleman published a statement that Hamilton had not seen the attack before it appeared. Indeed, wrote Coleman, Hamilton had been consulted upon only one of the twelve Jefferson-Callender articles, that one involving constitutional questions. When the statesman saw the accusations, he had expressed regret, for "he declared his sentiments to be averse to all personalities, not immediately connected with public considerations." But the editor did not take his lesson to heart. From time to time he indulged in outbursts against Jefferson of a character which we can comprehend only when we recall how outrageously even Washington had been vilified by the opposition press. Coleman was not content with harping upon Jefferson's actual humiliations and errors, as his flight before Tarleton in 1781 and his opposition to the Constitution in 1788. He accused him of trying to cheat a friend out of a debt, and repeated the tale of a black harem. In 1805 he wrote: "There is a point of profligacy in the line of human impudence, at which the most disguised heart seems to lose all sensibility to shame; and we congratulate the American public that our chief magistrate has so completely arrived at this enviable point."

However, in most editorials upon national affairs the *Evening Post* displayed a breadth and coolness reflecting the sagacity of the Federalist leaders who helped shape its policy. From the outset it pressed the Federalist contention that everything should be done to develop a mer-

chant marine and a strong navy; the aggressions of the Barbary pirates being frequently cited to prove the necessity for the latter. The Gallophile craze of Democratic circles was attacked week in and week out. When the claims of the sufferers by French spoliations were surrendered by the Administration, the indignation of the journal was outspoken. The destruction of most of the internal revenue system which Hamilton had laboriously built up was a cause of much beating of the breast. Not merely did it weaken the Federal Government, said the *Evening Post;* the nabob Virginia planter was given his carriage untaxed, and the Western backwoodsman his whisky, while the poor Eastern artisan still had to pay taxes upon his sugar, coffee, and salt. The pretensions of Gallatin to rival Hamilton as a master of finance were ridiculed. The repeal of the judiciary act passed under Adams was opposed as both unconstitutional and inexpedient.

But the primary achievement of Jefferson's administration, the Louisiana purchase, was treated in a tone so unlike that of other Federalist journals that it is clear Hamilton guided Coleman's pen. That noisy, artificial denunciation which went up from most Federalists was thoroughly discreditable. The *Evening Post* admitted that "it is an important acquisition"; that it was "essential to the peace and prosperity of our western country"; that it opened up "a free and valuable market to our commercial states"; and that "it will doubtless give éclat to Jefferson's Administration." Of course it did its best to spit into the Democratic soup. It asserted that Jefferson merited little credit for the purchase, since the fruit was knocked into his lap by the great losses of the French in the Dominican insurrection, and by the constant threat of the British to seize Louisiana. This was true, for Jefferson had set out only to buy an island for a dockyard, and had been momentarily bewildered when Napoleon offered the whole western domain. No one at that time understood the real value of the purchase, for Louisiana was an untraversed land, believed to be largely

desert. Hence it is not surprising to find the *Evening Post* asserting that the region was worth nothing for immediate settlement, especially since not one sixteenth the original area of the republic was yet occupied; and that its chief use might well be as something to barter for the Floridas, "obviously of far greater value to us than all the immense, undefined region west of the river."

The *Evening Post* could not miss the opportunity to ridicule Jefferson's characteristic exuberance. The President, in his enthusiastic message to Congress, told of a tribe of giant Indians, of river bluffs carved into antique towers, of prairie lands too rich to produce trees, and, one thousand miles up the Missouri, of a vast saline mountain, "said to be 180 miles long and 45 in width, composed of solid rock salt." Coleman descended upon this last assertion:

> Lest, however, the imagination of his friends in Congress might take a flight to the mountain and find salt trees there, and salt birds and beasts too, he with the most amiable and infantine simplicity, adds that there are no trees or even shrubs upon it. La, who would have thought it? Methinks such a great, huge mountain of solid, shining salt must make a dreadful glare in a clear sunshiny day, especially just after a rain. The President tells them too that "the salt works are pretty numerous," and that salt is as low as $1.50 a bushel, which is about twice as high as it can be bought in New York, where we have no salt mountain at all. . . . We think it would have been no more than fair in the traveler who informed Mr. Jefferson of this territory of solid salt, to have added that some leagues to the westward of it there was an immense lake of molasses, and that between this lake and the mountain of salt, there was an extensive vale of hasty pudding, stretching as far as the eye could reach, and kept in a state of comfortable eatability by the sun's rays, into which the natives, being all Patagonians, waded knee deep, whenever they were hungry, and helped themselves to salt with one hand to season their pudding, and molasses with the other to give it a relish. . . . Nothing seems wanting this affair in genuine style but for the House to "decree it with applause."

During Jefferson's second administration the *Evening Post* concentrated its fire upon his foreign policy. By

the beginning of 1807, when Coleman published a long series of articles reviewing the international situation, the great struggle raging in Europe was plainly threatening to involve America. He accused the government of studied unfriendliness toward Great Britain. He held that Jefferson had made any agreement with England impossible, first, by dispatching the mediocre Monroe as Minister to London, and second, by causing the passage in the spring of 1806 of a non-importation measure aimed directly at the British. Why had the Administration been so tame toward the Spaniards, who had actually invaded American soil in the West, and tried to bribe the leading Kentuckians to be traitors? "Instead of framing a spirited remonstrance to Spain, demanding satisfaction for the repeated injuries she has done us, Jefferson has been able to go quietly into his study and amuse himself with pleasing reveries about the prairie dogs and horned frogs of the Missouri." Above all, why had the government been so compliant toward Napoleon?

Napoleon, by the Berlin Decree of November, 1806, had declared that no ship which touched at an English port should be admitted to a port of France or her allies; the British, by an Order in Council of January, 1807, had tried to close all French ports to neutrals. Coleman regarded both acts as outrageous, but centered his attack upon the Berlin decree. Napoleon, as he said, was the primary aggressor, and the British step could be palliated as one of mere retaliation. "Our administration . . . were bound in duty to their constituents to have immediately sent a spirited remonstrance to Paris against the Berlin Decree, as being not only a violation of the known and established law of nations, but a direct and flagrant breach of the existing treaty between the two countries. And if such remonstrance failed in obtaining from the French Government an explicit exception of the United States from the operation of the Decree, the course that was formerly adopted by the Federalist administration, in 1798, should have been again adopted—ships of war should have been immediately equipped, and our mer-

chantmen permitted to arm for the protection of our trade." This position Coleman maintained throughout 1807. When the Administration tried to make the Order in Council more odious by declaring that the French had not put the Berlin Decree into effect before the British acted, the editor flatly contradicted it. He supported his contradiction by evidence from John B. Murray, a Federalist merchant who did an immense shipping business from the foot of Beekman Street, and others who had suffered from the French seizures.

But worse foreign encroachments were to come. Late in 1807 news arrived that a fresh British Order in Council had been issued, requiring all neutral vessels trading at ports closed to the British to stop at an English port and pay a duty, and to repeat this stop on the return voyage; while from Paris came word that Napoleon had told our Minister "there should no longer be any such thing as a neutral nation." Napoleon answered the new British Order by his Milan Decree, declaring that any ship which paid a tax in a British port might at any time thereafter be seized in French waters. It was difficult for an American to say a word for either combatant. Coleman admitted that the British action "carries something on the face of it humiliating to our national pride." But he continued so far as possible to defend the English, and attacked the French with increasing zeal.

This policy did not cause him to condone the attack of the *Leopard* upon the *Chesapeake,* which stirred even Federalist New York as nothing since the surrender of Cornwallis. It will be recalled that the British Minister requested the surrender of three men who had deserted from an English warship into the *Chesapeake;* that Jefferson refused; and that the *Leopard* followed the *Chesapeake* from Hampton Roads out to sea, poured a heavy fire into her, compelled her to strike colors, and took the three men by force. The *Evening Post* flared up in common with all other patriotic organs. It condemned the attack as an indefensible outrage. It demanded prompt and drastic action, and the editor's one fear was that

Jefferson would not resent the injury with proper vigor. It would be a mistake, wrote Coleman, simply to call upon the British Government for disavowal of the dastardly assault, and for trial of the offenders. The British would grant the disavowal, summon a court martial, and acquit the guilty naval officers. No, Congress must be convened, intercourse suspended, an embargo laid, and then, if England wished to negotiate, she could humbly send her envoys to us. In the meantime, the coast should be fortified, and steps should be taken to give the nation frigates instead of Jefferson's useless gunboats. For weeks Coleman harped upon this string:

> We entertain respect for Great Britain; it is the land that gave birth to our ancestors, and we feel an attachment to the soil that covers their bones; we venerate her institutions; we look with anxiety upon the struggle in which she is now engaged for self-preservation; we hope she will maintain her independence uninjured, and that it will yet be long, very long, before the sun of her glory will begin his descent to the west with diminished luster; but we can never behold with a criminal indifference the ill-judged, the unwarrantable attempts of an unwise ministry to trench upon the perfect rights of other nations; especially of one which both interest and inclination strongly unite to render friendly to her. . . . We shall always stand ready to raise our feeble voice and call upon the patriotism of our countrymen to rouse and resist them.

Four years later occurred the encounter between the *President* and *Little Belt*. The former vessel had been sent out from Annapolis to demand from the *Guerriere* the surrender of a seaman whom the British were said to have impressed. It encountered instead a ship which showed no colors, and which it overtook just at nightfall. The unknown craft refused to answer the American hail; shots were exchanged—both captains later claimed to have been fired upon first; and at daybreak the *President* found that it had cut to pieces a little British corvette of half its strength. Again the general excitement was intense. The *Evening Post* admitted that people were too inflamed to listen to a cool discussion of laws

and propriety. But in this instance it inclined to the British view. Not only did Coleman maintain that the *President* had been sent out with indefensible orders, being instructed to reclaim the impressed sailor by force if necessary; he held that the *Little Belt* had been justified in requiring the American ship to reveal its identity first, inasmuch as the *Little Belt* was exposed to a surprise attack by a French cruiser.

As the leading spokesman for the commercial community in New York, the *Evening Post* of course bitterly opposed the embargo. This stoppage of all foreign trade stunned the city. The day after the news came, Coleman referred to the universal "uncertainty, apprehension, dismay, and distress," in which "every one is running eagerly to his neighbor to inquire after information." He declared that it would bankrupt the merchants, and reduce thousands of laboring men to starvation. What! no more ships to leave any Manhattan slips, no more barges of grain to drop down the Hudson for foreign marts, no more droves of hogs and herds of cattle to be driven through Westchester for slaughtering and consignment abroad? The editor hastened to write a stinging article, and then, after consulting leading Federalists, put it aside in favor of an unsigned series by Rufus King.

It was pointed out that the embargo meant a direct loss of fifty millions a year, a sum that would build a navy amply sufficient to protect American rights at sea from France and Great Britain. The *Evening Post* painted a highly colored picture of the ruin of the city's shippers and wholesalers, the distress of shipwrights, shopkeepers, clerks, and cartmen, and the despair of Hudson Valley farmers. It ridiculed the notion that the embargo was a valuable implement for negotiation with England. The British markets were well supplied, and Britons were secretly rejoicing that the new American policy gave them a monopoly of the world's commerce. "Why is the United States like a pig swimming?" asked Coleman. "Because it cuts its own throat." The embargo certainly had no such effect abroad as its sponsors hoped. From

France it brought only the Bayonne decree, by which more than two hundred American ships were seized in French-controlled waters—an outrage of which the *Evening Post* made much; in England the shipping and farming interests were greatly benefited. As Rufus King predicted, it not only threw whole business communities into bankruptcy, but emptied the national treasury and depleted the strength of the nation. When the spring election came on, the *Post* announced a motto for Federalists which might have been made into the first American party platform: "No Embargo—No Foreign Influences—No Mystery—Freedom of Debate—Freedom of Suffrage—Freedom of Navigation and Trade—Liberty and Independence."

Right as the *Evening Post* and other Federalist sheets were upon the main issue, they were not always quite fair. They consistently held that Jefferson was keeping the object of the embargo secret,

> But though this in its operation
> May scatter ruin through the nation
> And *starve* the mouth of ragged labor,
> Or *bankrupt* his rich merchant-neighbor,
> It must be endured without one moan,
> Its *causes* and *object* both unknown!

while they never tired of capitalizing Thomas Paine's indiscreet statement in the *Public Advertiser* that the embargo was really preparatory to war with England. Yet it was plain to the blindest that the measure was a desperate, almost despairing, effort to avoid war. Again, the *Evening Post* accused the South and Southwest of sheer heartlessness. Jefferson cared not who starved at the North; he had saved a fortune from his salary, and could feed his negroes herring as well as hominy. "Who is Macon?" demanded Coleman when that leader supported legislation for preventing violations of the embargo. "A man who lives on the frontier of North Carolina; who can send out his negroes to provide for him his venison and his wild turkey; who raises his own hominy and grows his own cotton by the sweat of his hundred

slaves, and who I suppose feels just about as much sympathy for the millions of people in the Eastern States, at whom he levels his death-doing blow, as the Bashaw of Tripoli." Yet the South suffered in the long run more than the North, where manufactures speedily began to arise, and Jefferson saw his property in Virginia alarmingly impaired.

Until the last the *Evening Post* struggled against war with England, but it saw clearly that it was coming. As early as 1807 its Washington correspondent, probably one of the Federalist Congressmen from New York, stated that a Cabinet officer had told him that the country would have to choose between war with England or with France, and that England would probably be selected. In 1810 the editor himself wrote that America could not remain at peace with both belligerents, "and it is very clear how the country will decide." The journal opposed the Macon bill in 1810, permitting importation and exportation only in American bottoms, as involving certain retaliation from Great Britain. It kept its two or three short news columns garnished with paragraphs upon the many American seamen languishing in French prisons since the Bayonne Decree. Thus in 1808, giving a long account of the mistreatment of two skippers from the city, Captains Palmer and Waterman, the editor exclaimed: "My blood boils in my veins." The next year he reproduced a pitiful letter from a tar confined at Arras, compelled to subsist on a franc a day, and burst out: "Would you rest so silent and tame under a thousandth part as much from Great Britain? You know you would not." He wanted an instant rupture of relations with France. The military tyranny which Napoleon spread over unwilling nations of Europe was attacked in fitting terms, and we find the French cruelties in the Peninsular campaign dwelt upon at length. When in 1808 Napoleon strengthened his alliance with the Russian Emperor, Coleman demanded: "Shall we join the confederacy against England, the only free and independent nation left in Europe?"

There was a fitful gleam of sunshine in 1809, when the British Minister, Erskine, announced that the Orders in Council would be withdrawn; but the clouds closed in again when it appeared that he had exceeded his instructions. Coleman, examining these instructions at length, blamed Erskine harshly for this disappointment to American hopes, but not the British Government. Like other Federalist organs, the *Evening Post* regarded the dismissal of the next British envoy, Jackson, as "frivolous and unfounded," saying that "no public Minister was ever so shamefully dealt with." Helped by King and others, Coleman bestowed great labor upon a series of articles dealing with the Jackson episode, which he flattered himself would have more than ephemeral value. The Secretary of State, Robert Smith, gave particular notice to this series. Coleman rejoiced over the manner in which other Federalist sheets caught up and echoed his points. The Boston *Repertory,* he said, is "always ready, independent, correct, and able"; Dwight's *Mirror* in Connecticut "shines preéminent"; in New Jersey the Trenton *Federalist* was a firm ally; in Philadelphia the *United States Gazette,* long alone, was now supported by the *Freeman's Journal* and the *True American,* while the Baltimore *Federal Republican* and the Virginia *Patriot* had been active. All these journals recognized in the *Evening Post* the voice of King, Gouverneur Morris, and Col. Varick.

It became evident late in 1811 that the paper's long fight was lost. In reply to a war article by Duane, Coleman in a paragraph of deep pessimism admitted as much:

> We have not, we never had, but one opinion respecting our public ffairs with Great Britain; no differences will ever be brought to a termination; no negotiations for that purpose will ever be seriously entered upon, while Madison, or any other man in Virginia, is President. All who entertain different views or different hopes, will find themselves wofully mistaken. And if war must come, why not the sooner the better? I am free to confess, that I think a breeze from any quarter is better than that stagnant and sickly atmosphere which we have breathed so long, and which must, sooner or later, bring with it pestilence and

death. It is the violent storm, the tremendous hurricane, with hailstone, thunder, and lightning, which cools and purifies the air, reanimates the face of nature, and restores life to pristine vigor and health.

There was in this statement almost the force of prophecy. The war actually had just the benefits it foreshadowed. It cleared a sultry, oppressive atmosphere, brought new and vital forces in national life into play, and gave Americans a unity and self-confidence they had not felt before. But this note was of course not struck again. As the country moved steadily toward war in the spring of 1812, it was with the *Evening Post* denouncing Clay, the chief of the "war hawks," as a liar and demagogue; accusing the government of deliberate misrepresentation when it said that the Napoleonic decrees were no longer being enforced; and calling for public meetings in New York to protest against the drift to hostilities. When in April an effort was made to float the "Gallatin Loan," Coleman did all that he could to discredit it. There was no security, he said; the interest rate, six per cent., was too low. "As it will very much depend upon the filling up of the loan whether we shall or shall not go to war, it is evident that no man who is averse to that calamity can ever, consistently, lend his assistance to the government to plunge us into it."

The great majority of men of property in the city were with the *Evening Post* in its opposition; so were most of the lawyers, the faculty of Columbia College, the pastors of the leading churches, and professional men in general. On June 15, four days before the declaration of war, the *Evening Post* published a memorial of protest signed by fifty-six principal merchants, John Jacob Astor heading the list. It is clear that the *Evening Post* was at all times in close touch with commercial sentiment. In April it said that the best-informed men in town calculated the amount of American shipping and goods within British reach abroad, and liable to confiscation, at $100,000,000. All seaport towns, it added, were exposed to bombardment and destruction by the British seventy-

fours. Coleman but expressed the fears of the counting rooms along lower Broadway and the rich shopkeepers of Pearl Street when he assured New Yorkers that the State would be undone. "This portion of the country will," he warned, "on account of its wealth and the easy access to it by water, become the seat of war; and our defenseless situation will subject us, in the case of a few years war, to a desolation which a half century cannot restore."

II

Twice has the *Evening Post* opposed with passionate detestation, from beginning to end, an American war. The two editors responsible, Coleman and E. L. Godkin, were as far as D'Artagnan from being weak-kneed pacifists. Both in their youth had shouldered arms; both were of Anglo-Irish blood, with a Celtic inclination toward battle; both went through life joyfully snuffing new frays from afar. It is well at this point, with Coleman taking the leadership of all the anti-war journals south of the Connecticut, to stop a moment to note what were his personal qualities, as shown in his editorship, and what the conditions of his work. The old-time journalist did not speak softly, and carried a big stick. Coleman had as much need as the rest to learn the use of dueling pistols, and to know how to graze the libel laws. "He was naturally courageous," says Bryant, "and having entered into a dispute, he never sought to decline any of its consequences."

We have noted that when Philip Hamilton was killed, the editor condemned dueling as barbarous, and called for a rigid legislation against it. Yet in 1803 he was himself provoked into a duel. The previous autumn Cheetham had in an indirect, cowardly fashion charged him with the paternity of a mulatto child in Greenfield, a charge which Coleman had no difficulty in showing utterly false, but which he resented by a challenge. Cheetham accepted. News of the impending encounter got abroad, and Judge Brockholst Livingston immediately issued a

bench warrant, compelled the appearance of the two editors before him, and allowed them to depart only after they had engaged not to use more deadly weapons than pen and ink. Unfortunately, one Captain Thompson, an ardent Democrat, accused Coleman of letting the secret of the duel escape, and of having been animated by a cowardly motive. Coleman promptly challenged the fire-eating captain, and early in the new year the pair fought in Love Lane, a sequestered road, then well outside the city, which followed the present line of Twenty-first Street between Sixth and Eighth Avenues. It was dusk of a cold winter's day when they met, with snow falling and other circumstances uniting, as a second quaintly observed, to make the affair "uncomfortable." They fired two shots at ten paces, and then, darkness coming down, moved closer and fired two more. Thompson, exclaiming "I've got it!" sank mortally wounded into the arms of his physician, Dr. McLean. He was carried to his sister's house in town, was laid on the doorstep, the bell was rung, and the family found him bleeding and near death. He refused to tell who had shot him, or to give any evidence whatever regarding the duel, saying that everything had been honorably done—and his antagonist must not be molested.

Coleman had repeated encounters of a less serious character. In the *Evening Post* of January 12, 1807, he begged the public to discredit Cheetham's "account of the fracas on Saturday between Dr. Walker and myself," as it was full of errors, but he did not offer the correct particulars himself. In 1810 blows were struck when his vote was challenged and he was insulted at the polls by a tavern-keeper who said that Coleman could not be a citizen because he had published the statement, "I had rather be a dog and bay the moon than own myself an American." This was a Democratic garbling of a half-sentence in one of the *Post's* editorials.

Early in 1818 the editor published a narrative of the misconduct of a certain Democrat named Henry B. Hagerman while traveling as a Judge Advocate up-State.

Hagerman stopped at a Kingston hotel, kept by an estimable widow, and for some fancied grievance insulted her so grossly that no newspaper of to-day would print the details which Coleman laid before the public. On the evening of April 11 Coleman was overtaken by Hagerman near sunset at the corner of Murray and Church Streets, and attacked without warning from the rear. His assailant used the loaded butt of a rawhide whip. The editor was stunned by the first blow, was repeatedly struck and kicked as he lay prostrate, and when he staggered to his feet, half blind with blood, was given a still more savage beating. Public indignation against Hagerman rose so high that he was hurried to jail for safety, and not being able to ask for a change of venue, pleaded for postponement of his trial until it subsided. Two years to a day after the murderous attack, Coleman was awarded $4,000 in damages, a huge sum for 1820. But it was none too large. The editor had been prostrated for weeks, recurrent strokes of paralysis followed, and he was never in sound health again.

The physical violence to which editors were then exposed harmonized with a violence of temper and manner which was far too prominent in journalism, as in politics. In noting this abusiveness it must be remembered that the press was the product and mirror of its time. Politics was conducted with far more scurrility and coarseness than now, and the newspapers were largely an appendage of politics. A day of backwoods gouging and fashionable dueling, of constant fighting between street gangs in all the large cities, of fisticuffs on the floor of the House of Representatives, of a low standard of manners everywhere, was not a day for refined newspaper methods. It took time for editors to learn that hard reasons do more execution than hard names. Editors, moreover, were prone to set up medieval conventions; they regarded themselves as so many knights errant, roaming the land for battle, no sooner seeing a strange crest than they galloped to shiver lances.

It is usual to quote Coleman's quatrain

Lie on, Duane, lie on for pay,
And Cheetham, lie thou too,
More 'gainst truth you cannot say
Than truth can say 'gainst you,

as a bold specimen of the editorial amenities of a century ago. But Coleman went far beyond the lie direct and countercheck quarrelsome. The American public has always refused to take at face value the epithets which editors exchange, and doubtless in Jefferson's time it put a Pickwickian construction upon them. Referring to the most prominent Democratic editor, Coleman once quoted Milton's line, "Squat like a toad at the ear of Eve," adding: "I beg the devil's pardon for comparing him in any shape with Duane." Of Cheetham he said that he was so habituated to lying that given a choice of truth and mendacity he invariably preferred the latter, and on another occasion he listed twenty-five lies in a single article by "the President's unlucky toad-eater."

Coleman thought nothing of referring to Dr. Peter Irving, head of the *Morning Chronicle*, as a "malevolent coxcomb," and to his partner as "a pedant and blackguard." Other journals fared no better. When the *Public Advertiser*, a new Clintonian organ, libeled the *Evening Post*, Coleman denounced its "villainy" and challenged the "vile reptiles" editing it to produce their evidence. The conductor of the Long Island *Star* also fell afoul of the *Evening Post*. "This Kirk I have always despised as a flippant, conceited, shallow fellow," wrote Coleman, "but I did not take him for so great a fool as his nonsense shows him to be, nor think him so black-hearted and malignant a calumniator." In 1806 he termed Samuel H. Smith of the Washington *National Intelligencer*, the so-called "court journal" of Jefferson, "the little monkey." Nine years later, when the era of good feeling was commencing, he prided himself upon his repression in speaking of the same able newspaper, in the columns of which Clay had been glad to appear: "I shall take no other notice of the charge in that profligate paper

than to say I have long observed there is no misrepresentation too base, no violation of truth too palpable, not to be gladly adopted and circulated by that infamous organ."

Be it said to Coleman's credit that these examples are the worst to be selected from the files for fifteen years, during which the issues of the *Aurora* and *American Citizen* teemed with such expressions. Moreover, there was some justification for them. Cheetham, and to a less extent Duane, were unabashed liars; Peter Irving was so much of a coxcomb that even his friends called him "sissie Irving"; and Kirk certainly was a calumniator. Most creditable of all to Coleman, he refrained from dastardly slanders upon the private life of his contemporaries, whereas they gave him no such consideration. In 1807 he declared his conviction that Duane was in receipt of French gold, and many years later accused M. M. Noah, the famous Jewish journalist, of avowing himself open to a money bribe from the Clintonian faction, but he said nothing of the conduct of any such man apart from his editorial office. Yet his own enemies fabricated a story that he had been dismissed from the Vermont bar because he had bored a hole in a courthouse ceiling to overhear rival counsel, and accused him of illegally converting the funds of Greenfield neighbors to his own uses.

It is not strange that when the press was filled with this sort of utterance, libel suits were numerous. Cheetham at the beginning of 1804 had fourteen actions pending against him, and in 1807 admitted that the total damages which he had been compelled to pay reached almost $4,000. Aaron Burr had brought one of these suits, while ex-Mayor Varick in 1803 had obtained a judgment of $200. It is evidence of the comparatively moderate tone of the *Evening Post* that no suit against it ever succeeded, though a number were begun. One of these actions was brought by Robert Macomb, clerk of the Sessions Court, whom Coleman had accused of taking illegal fees, and another by a politician named Arcularius.

III

When war was actually declared in June, 1812, this belligerent editor, like most New York merchants, like four men in five throughout New England, believed that it meant the bootless ruin of trade and agriculture. It had come with such final suddenness, he said, that American ships in European waters would almost all be taken by British cruisers. It was professedly a war for freedom of the sea; in reality the shipping States believed, as Coleman put it, that it grew out of "the Southern anti-commercial spirit."

De Witt Clinton, the ambitious mayor, who was courting the help of King, John Wells, and the *Evening Post* in his aspirations for the Federalist nomination against Madison that summer, told Coleman that he believed ninety-nine men in every hundred in the city really were opposed to the war. The editor was highly sarcastic in his references to the local Democrats as "fellow subjects of our loving Emperor Napoleon," and in those to "Monsieurs Gallatin and Madison." For a few weeks, while an alliance with France was thought a possibility, the *Evening Post* steadily declaimed against it. A war with Great Britain, fought single-handed, "will be neither a predatory war nor a bloody war," it said; but if France sends her squadrons to the American coast, British fleets will follow, and the seaport towns will suffer. When Daniel Webster, a young man of thirty almost unknown outside New Hampshire, delivered a Fourth of July oration denouncing any coöperation with France, he was fervently praised.

New Yorkers were fearful of two perils: a British invasion across the St. Lawrence or Niagara Rivers, and bombardments by sea. "We are fighting the world's greatest Power," protested Coleman, "without the means of annoyance or even defense." He told his readers, incorrectly, that the frigate *Constitution* was sent from Norfolk to Boston with only two rounds of cannonballs; and correctly, that Fort Niagara, on an "exposed and

utterly defenseless frontier," had scarcely powder enough for a Fourth of July salute.

For armaments at sea the *Evening Post* was always eloquent, but it took a different attitude toward the bustle of preparations to invade Canada. When President Madison requested the Governors to place the militia at his disposal, Coleman applauded the New England executives who refused. Conjuring up a vision of a harsh military despotism, he pronounced the President's action one "highly dangerous to the liberties of the people, and to our republican form of government." In editorial after editorial, moreover, he discouraged recruiting for Federal regiments. Are you willing, he asked volunteers, "to attempt foreign conquests while your wives and little ones are left exposed to an exasperated and unfeeling foe?" As autumn came on, he made the most of the reports of suffering among underclad troops. He wished no one to forget that their misery had been caused by "a wretched, incapable, mob-courting administration, less concerned to provide supplies for their army than to secure by low intrigue the places they so unworthily fill."

It required no little courage to declare that the war was "a great national calamity," that it was "clearly unjust," and that the points in dispute were not worth the blood and treasure being spent. Two years previous, when the *Evening Post* was angrily opposing the impending conflict, a mob of Democrats had gathered at Martling's Porter-House, and just before midnight had attacked the house of Michael Burnham, part-owner of the journal, smashing his windows, and nearly killing an infant. Just after the declaration of war occurred the memorable mob attack upon the Baltimore *Federal Republican,* in which Gen. James Lingan, a Revolutionary veteran defending the office, was killed, and Gen. Henry Lee crippled. Jack Binns, in the Philadelphia *Democratic Press,* proclaimed that it would be only natural if a body of angry men executed the same summary justice upon the traitorous editor of the *Evening Post.* For some time anonymous threats poured in upon Coleman.

Among them was one which left him so certain that violence was actually brewing that he applied to Mayor Clinton for protection; and the city watch was doubled, special constables were held in readiness, and a party of armed friends spent the night at Coleman's house. Nothing, however, occurred.

Coleman defiantly maintained that his right to free speech was in no way abridged by the declaration of war, and published a special series of editorials, highly legalistic in nature, denouncing the Baltimore outrage. He reminded the Democrats that in intimidating and attacking the Federalists for their opposition they had short memories. Had they forgotten their open resistance to the hostilities which the United States waged against France in 1798? This attitude, fortunately, met with powerful support. At a great peace mass-meeting in Washington Hall on Aug. 18, John Jay, Rufus King, Gouverneur Morris, Egbert Benson, and Richard Varick all assailed the war and asserted the right to outspoken criticism of it. By this date Coleman's views had met what seemed to him the strongest possible confirmation. It had become known early in August that the British had repealed the Orders in Council, which were the great cause of the war, and for a moment hopes of peace had risen high; but Madison immediately rejected the armistice proffered by the British commander Prevost. The anger of New York and New England Federalists passed all bounds. "God of truth and mercy!" raged the *Evening Post*. "Our treasure is to be wasted, our immense frontiers are to be one scene of devastation, where the merciless savage is to revel in the blood of defenseless men, women, and children, because the *form* of the revocation is not satisfactory to our precise and critical President!"

The first news of an important military event confirmed Coleman's gloomy apprehensions. On Aug. 31 he was able to write a long editorial upon Hull's surrender at Detroit in that I-told-you-so spirit which is an editor's subtlest joy. He called it disgraceful:

A nation, counting eight millions of souls, deliberating and planning for a whole winter and spring, and part of a summer, the invasion and conquest of a neighboring province, at length making that invasion; and in one month its army retiring—captured—and captured in a fortified place—captured almost without firing a gun! Miserably deficient in practical talent must be the administration which formed the plan of that invasion; or the army which has thus surrendered must be a gang of more cowardly poltroons, than ever disgraced a country. . . .

What! March an army *into* a country where there were not more than seven or eight hundred soldiers to oppose them, and not make the army large enough! March them *from* a country, which is the granary of the world, and let them famish on the very frontiers for want of provisions! Issue a gasconading proclamation threatening to exterminate the enemy, and surrender your whole army to them! If there be judgment in this people, they will see the utter unfitness of our rulers for anything beyond management, intrigue, and electioneering.—They have talents enough to influence a misguided populace against their best friends; but they cannot protect the nation from insult and disgrace.

Similar attacks upon the Administration's incompetence followed every other reverse. From the early defeat at Queenstown Heights to the "Bladensburg Races," when an American force fled ignominiously before Cockburn's invaders and exposed Washington to capture, the *Evening Post* missed no opportunity for harsh criticism. "Woe to that nation whose king is a child!" was a favorite quotation of Coleman's. The journal was far from unpatriotic, and sincerely deplored the several defeats, but it held the government rigidly responsible for them.

The editor never changed his opinion that, to use his words in the last year of the war, it was "an unsuccessful war, . . . a war declared without just cause and without preparation, for the continuance of which no man can assign a reason, and from the termination of which no man expects an advantage." And patriotic though Coleman was, he rejoiced in the failure of the successive efforts to invade Canada. He thought conquest in that quarter the most shameless territory-grabbing. In these utterances

we catch the first accents of the *Evening Post's* century-long campaign against "imperialism." He wrote late in 1814:

Uti Possidetis, or Keep What You've Got.—The Lexington paper (Kentucky) some time ago, before the British had got possession of Fort Niagara, Michilimackinac, Castine, Moose Island, etc., etc., about the time when Gen. Wilkinson was to sup "in Montreal or Heaven," this paper then said if any ministers should make a treaty on any other basis, than each to keep what they had got, they ought to have a halter. But then it was *my* bull and *your* cow.

In sharp contrast with these editorials were the exultant comments of the journal upon the dazzling successes of the Americans at sea. The Federalists since 1801 had constantly called for a larger navy. The first-known and most famous sea-flight of 1812 was the victory on Aug. 19 of the *Constitution* over the *Guerriere,* a vessel with which a London paper had declared no American ship could cope. "We have always contended that on an equal footing Americans can be whipped by none," cried the *Evening Post.* "Man for man and gun for gun, even the veteran British tars can get no advantage over the Americans." With a shrewd appreciation of the opportunities which Perry and McDonough seized, it began to insist upon a naval force on the lakes. Naturally, it still taunted the Democrats:

Though very little present benefit is to be expected from the war, commenced as it *has been* and carried on as it *will be,* under the present administration, yet it may have one good effect; it will prove that in a contest where the *freedom of the seas* is the object, a naval force is much superior to an army on the land. It will prove, what the Federalists have always advocated, and what the present ruling party have always opposed, the necessity of a maritime force to a commercial people.

News came soon after of the capture of the British sloop *Alert by* the American frigate *Essex,* and on Dec. 7 it was known that the *United States,* commanded by De-

catur, had taken the *Macedonian*. "This is the third victory which has crowned our little naval force with laurels —may they bloom perennial!" exclaimed Coleman. He rather ill-naturedly accused the Administration of begrudging the seamen, who were mostly Yankees, their victories. "Our language is," he concluded, "give us commerce and let us alone to protect it. We have ships and we have men; nor will we go to France for either, though your Jeffersons may recommend it ever so warmly."

Nor did the *Evening Post* fail to take a vigorously patriotic attitude upon the questions raised by the Hartford Convention. The year 1814 drew to a close with the entire coast tightly blockaded by the British, the invasions of Canada all failures, the capitol at Washington in ashes, the British in possession of northern Maine, and their hands at last free in Europe. Mr. Madison's war had ceased to be an offensive war, and had become defensive. The national government, almost without an army, almost without money, seemed on the point of collapse. On Dec. 15 there met at Hartford a convention of delegates from all the New England States, who for three weeks deliberated in secret; some believed that they were laying plans to declare all New England—as Nantucket had already declared herself—neutral, and to throw open its ports to the British, while others said that they were plotting secession, and the erection of a Yankee republic.

Coleman at the time had been called to Middletown, Conn., on business, and proceeded to Hartford to see some friends. Theodore Dwight, the secretary of the convention, later stated that the editor tried to gain informal entrance, but this Coleman denied. He never, even when years afterward the Hartford Convention had become an object of deep reproach, condemned it. But upon returning to New York he did express a deprecatory opinion of it. He commenced by declaring that the uproar of the Southerners over this "treasonable" gathering was as hypocritical as it was groundless. Who were these canting Virginians who inveighed against separatism and

State Rights? The North had not forgotten that when Jay's treaty arrived, the newspapers of Virginia unanimously began to discuss secession. It had not forgotten that Senator Giles, author of the detestable Conscription bill which had just failed, had then openly advocated a dissolution of the Union. Had not Madison maintained, in the Virginia Assembly, the abstract right of secession? But Coleman then proceeded to speak a word of reassurance, and another of warning:

> What precisely the Convention will do, it would be presumption in any one to predict. . . . But from our personal knowledge of the gentlemen composing the Convention, it will not be difficult to pronounce with certainty what they will not do. They have been selected from the most respectable men in New England, distinguished for their prudence, for their wisdom, for their firmness. . . . We may be justified in saying this respectable body, with such a president [George Cabot] at their head, will not do anything rash or precipitate or violent; they will not take any step but what every man of sound principles, every friend to social order throughout the Union, will approve. . . . While they are bent on preserving the rights that are reserved to the States or the people, from usurpation and abuse, they will take care not to trench upon those powers which are delegated to the United States by the Constitution. The vessel at present *wears* well, and while there is room to believe that she will *go safe about*, and there is sea-room enough to do it in, why should they attempt to throw her *in stays*?

The vessel did come safe about. When six weeks later the news of the treaty of Ghent reached New York late at night, the city was thrown into such jubilation by the mere ending of the conflict that no one stopped to inquire the terms. But Coleman and the other local Federalist leaders, as they watched the crowds surging up and down Broadway crying—"A peace! A peace!" knew that the Democrats had nothing to boast. After a calm Sunday, the editor presented his views on Monday morning. He would stake his reputation that when the terms became known, "it will be found that the government have not by the negotiation obtained one single avowed object,

for which they involved the country in this bloody and expensive war." He enumerated these objects—the stoppage of impressments, the conquest of Canada, and the abolition of commercial restrictions. He catalogued the loss of life, the suffering on every frontier, and the waste of $150,000,000 in treasure. The one gain that Mr. Madison had obtained was a second term at $25,000 a year in a marble executive mansion, gorgeously refurnished. But, he concluded, "let the nation rejoice—we have escaped ruin."

A part of Coleman's disloyalty in the war, as opposition journals called it, lay in his vindictive pleasure over every disaster that befell French arms. Editorials on foreign affairs were rare, and usually ill-informed. But three months after war was declared the *Evening Post* based upon Wellington's victories in Spain the sound prediction that the French forces would soon be compelled to evacuate the Peninsula altogether. "Bonaparte will never be emperor of the world," wrote Coleman, with an eye also upon Russia's hostility; "it will require all his talents to maintain himself even on the throne of France." On Dec. 12, 1812, when news had just reached New York of the burning of Moscow (Sept. 16-20), leaving Napoleon stranded on an ashheap, a really shrewd statement of his peril appeared:

> We have conversed with an intelligent gentleman who resided a long time in Russia, and about seven years of the time in the city of Moscow. He informs us that the weather in that country is generally pleasant till after the first of October, when the frost sets in, and excessive storms of rain and sleet are experienced, and continue with very little intermission until about the middle of December. All the time the roads are so overwhelmed with water and ice, that traveling is extremely uncomfortable, and many times quite impracticable. After the middle of December the snows begin to fall in such quantities that all traveling is entirely at an end; and the usual communication from town to town is interrupted for several weeks, the snows sometimes falling to the depth of eight or ten feet. He thinks, if Bonaparte did not commence his retreat from Moscow by the middle of October, that

he will be obliged to winter there; for after that time it will be impossible for him to get out of Russia. . . . If he is obliged to winter there, the Russians have nothing to do but to cut off his supplies until about the middle of December, after which time all travel ceases until spring, and the great army of the north will be annihilated.

Indeed, it is plain from all the accounts we can collect from . . . the French papers . . . that the Russians have nothing to do but to hold out this winter, and their country will be relieved from its invaders. That they are determined to persevere appears to be certain; the destruction of such a city as Moscow is a proof of that determination, and a sure pledge that they will never surrender while they can hold a foot of ground.

Although the defeat of Napoleon at Leipsic meant that England would thenceforth be able to turn Wellington's veteran armies against us, Federalist editors rejoiced as if it had been an American victory. They forgot for the moment the implications of the event for the war on this side; they thought only of the triumph of freedom over a military despot. "It is the morning dawn of liberty in Europe after a long, a dark, and a dismal night," wrote Coleman. "This is the first ray of light which has visited the eyes of an oppressed people for many years past. For while Bonaparte remained in power even hope was dead—nothing but tyranny and oppression could be expected. And so firm had he fixed himself in his usurped seat, that it appeared almost out of the power of human exertions to shake him. . . . New prospects are opening up on the thinking mind; humanity appears to be near the end of her sufferings."

The wars in Europe and America over, the old rancors forgotten, Coleman gladly accepted the era of good feeling. In the spring of 1816 the *Evening Post* supported Rufus King in his losing fight for the Governorship. But from the beginning of the year it had made up its mind that the Democrats, headed by Monroe, would gain the Presidency that fall, and it went through the motions of sustaining King for the higher office—he received only 34 electoral votes against Monroe's 183—listlessly. Mon-

roe's success made of the Federalist party a mere corpse, over which factions in State politics fought like hyenas. Coleman showed no reluctance in admitting the demise, though he conventionally explained it as resulting from the Democratic adoption of Federalist principles. When in 1819 the *Aurora* attacked Monroe, the *Evening Post* actually flew out in the President's defense. It was satisfied, wrote the editor, "that, take it all in all, *the administration of James Monroe is, at this day, more generally acceptable to all classes of society in the United States, than that of any other man has ever been, since the days of Washington.*" Coleman was entertained in 1819 by Vice-President Tompkins at the latter's Staten Island home, and confessed later that he fell quite under the sway of Tompkins's "great affability" and "his winning and familiar manner." In short, by 1820 no one would have been surprised if some prophet had foretold that the journal of the "Federalist Field-Marshal" would shortly become the leading Democratic organ in the city.

But while it became half-Democratic, the *Evening Post* never ceased to be the spokesman of the best commercial sentiment in the city. As such, it opposed, with a bitter show of sectional feeling, the Missouri Compromise in 1820. The question at issue, said Coleman, was nothing more or less than "whether they shall or shall not be allowed to establish a new market for the sale of human flesh." When the Virginia Legislature made a veiled threat of secession unless Missouri were admitted, Coleman rated the South angrily. They were hypocrites to talk about the Hartford Convention; they had been cowards when Washington was burned; on John Randolph's own statement, they were in constant fear of a slave insurrection—these and other "bitter taunts," as the Richmond *Enquirer* called them, proved the force of Jefferson's statement that the Missouri controversy was like a firebell in the dark.

But the disintegration of the Federalist party of course robbed the *Evening Post* of a great part of its influence. It was no longer a sounding board for the best leadership

of that party; men no longer recognized in its utterance the voices of Hamilton's ablest and most energetic successors, King, Troup, Jay, Kent, and Morris. It became merely one of a half dozen journals recognized to have editors of brains and principle; and in 1816 it was destined to wait just a decade until it began to receive distinction from a man of something more than brains—a man of genius.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CITY AND THE "EVENING POST'S" PLACE IN IT

THE first carrier boys of the *Evening Post* had a city of 60,000, a little larger than Mount Vernon and a little smaller than Passaic of to-day, to traverse. From the pleasant park at the Battery it was a distance of only about a mile north to the outskirts of the town. Just beyond its fringes, partly surrounded by woods, lay the Collect or Fresh Water Pond, from which water was piped to the city, and in which, despite the ordinances, neighboring housewives occasionally washed the family garments. There were seven wards, designated, since the names Out-Ward, Dock-Ward, and so on had been lost, by numbers. The northern part of the town was the plain, plebeian part, with much more actual wretchedness and want in severe winters than New York should have tolerated. It was also the stronghold of Democracy, and the fastest-growing section.

Every one who had any pretensions to gentility managed to crowd south of Reade and Chatham Streets, and the nearer a merchant or lawyer approached the Battery the greater were likely to be his claims to social eminence. The mansions that faced Bowling Green, or that, like Archibald Gracie's, looked from State Street over the bay, many of them graceful with porticoes and pillars, were called "Quality Row"; and the neighboring streets shone in their reflected luster. Many rich citizens, of course, had suburban seats along the Hudson and East Rivers. The aristocracy prided itself upon substantial virtues and substantial possessions—solid mahogany, thick cut glass, heavy solid silver sets, old and pure wines, and old customs. It was made up of almost indistinguishable elements of Dutch, English, New England, and Huguenot blood. The members took no shame from

their general absorption in mercantile pursuits; and Alexander Stewart would himself show you over his ship-goods establishment at 68 Wall, Robert Lenox would talk of the 35,000 acres of Genesee Valley land which he had in hand for sale, one of the Swords brothers would offer you his newest publication in his Pearl Street bookshop, and a scion of the De Peyster family, which had been in business since 1650, would himself sell you one of his hogsheads of sherry at Murray's Wharf.

Twenty years later the *Evening Post* declared that "there is not a city in the world which, in all respects, has advanced with greater rapidity than the city of New York." The population had leaped up to 130,000. "Whichever way we turn, new buildings present themselves to our notice. In the upper wards particularly entire streets of elegant brick buildings have been formed on sites which only a few years ago were either covered with marshes, or occupied by a few straggling frame huts of little or no value." On Canal Street "almost a city of itself" had sprung up where recently there had been a stagnant marsh. In Greenwich Village and along the Bowery two other veritable cities were assuming shape. Large fortunes had been made by the sale of real estate, and the prospective opening of the Erie Canal was accentuating the boom. A visitor from Boston, whose impressions were published in the *Evening Post,* praised some of the Broadway stores as showing "more splendor and magnificence than any I have ever seen," commended the paving of the north-and-south streets, and showed his interest in the city's three show-places, the Museum, Trinity Church, and the new City Hall, with its rich Turkey carpets, crimson silk curtains, and eighteen imposing portraits of warriors and statesmen. In 1823 a new building was erected at the corner of Pearl and Flymarket Streets. The *Evening Post* listed the objects placed in the corner-stone—a paper by a local pundit on the supposed Northmen's tower at Newport, a copy of the *Plough-Boy,* a life of Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill, the seventh report of the Bible Society, and some coins. But the journal's chief

interest lay in the amazing cost of the site—$20,500 for a plot 25 by 40 feet. This, it said, was as striking evidence of the city's growth as the "twenty elegant ships" which now plied regularly to Liverpool.

What part had the *Evening Post* tried to play in this transformation of a provincial town into a metropolis? William Cullen Bryant states that when he joined the journal in 1826, it was "much occupied with matters of local interest, the sanitary condition of the city, the state of its streets, its police, its regulations of various kinds." That had always been true. No other New York editor of the time took an interest in civic improvements that approached Coleman's.

For the paper's first fifteen years it might have been questioned whether it viewed with greater dismay the errors of the Democrats at Washington or the running at large of great numbers of hogs within the city limits. New Yorkers of to-day think of the toleration of swine as characteristic only of the backward Southern towns described by Mark Twain; but our great-grandfathers saw them rooting in City Hall Park and basking in Broadway and Wall Street. As Coleman told his readers in 1803, they were "a multitude." Some men made a business of raising them. One householder of the Fifth Ward in 1803 had sixty at large; fifteen years later Coleman knew a colored man who had more than forty. Whenever, from a diet of dead cats and other gutter dainties, they threatened to become diseased, they were hurried to the butcher; with the result that fastidious people ate no pork. Every one admitted that they were unsightly, malodorous, and kept the walks filthy, while every few months a carriage upset over one. But the poor demanded them, and it was argued they were scavengers. The one restriction, ill-enforced, was that their noses be ringed to protect the turf.

As late as 1828 Coleman complained that pigs were met everywhere in the lower part of the city. In his campaign against them he gave full space to the accidents they caused. A not untypical mishap occurred in 1819.

An alarm of fire in Maiden Lane brought the firemen and the usual crowd of boys racing down Broadway with ropes hauling a fire-engine. As they were at top speed a large hog darted into their path, the whole line went down, and the heavy engine passed over several. The corporation had already passed an ordinance (effective Jan. 1, 1818) making it illegal to let hogs go unpenned, but it was flagrantly violated. "Although every street in the city is thronged with hogs, yet none could be found who were individual owners," said the paper soon afterward. When efforts were made to send "hog-carts" along the Bowery and other infested streets, angry owners gathered and overset the wagons. In the spring of 1829 three thieves were actually arrested for driving into the city, collecting fourteen fat shoats from the streets, and starting for the country; they intended to bring them back as prime corn-fed country pork. How long, asked the *Evening Post*, would the shameful indifference to the ordinance endure?

It was necessary to keep up an incessant fire of complaint against the wretched street-repair and street-cleaning systems of the time. As early as 1803 the *Evening Post* declared that the streets should in part be flushed, and that it would hence be well "if the waterworks were the property of the public, as was originally intended; and not of a private company, who are attentive only to their individual interest." In the summer of 1807 Coleman, who was fond of a horse and gig, wrote that the Broadway road was in "such a state of neglect and ruin that no one could drive through it after dark but at the hazard of limbs and life," that after a heavy rain horses sank up to their girths, and that serious accidents had occurred, one rider breaking his thigh and another his shoulder-bone. The ways were then crossed at intervals by open gutters, sometimes so deep as to be a serious impediment to traffic; even in front of St. Paul's, in the heart of the city, Broadway when the *Evening Post* was founded was traversed by one almost impassable. A campaign had to be begun by the press for covered sewers.

In 1817 the streets were described as dirtier than at any other time since "the year of filth," when the British had evacuated the city after the Revolution. In a sudden access of energy the next year the authorities set gangs of twenty to fifty men once a week to attacking the streets with brooms. A fearful dust was raised, and yet the roadways were still imperfectly cleaned. Coleman pointed out that more frequent sweeping by smaller forces would be better, and that in Boston much of the work was done at night. In 1823 there came new grumblings over the filth and garbage. "Notwithstanding the great extent of the city of London," wrote Coleman, "we have seldom seen cleaner streets than those of the British capital. With those of New York the comparison would be odious." What was chiefly needed he thought to be plenty of water, and common sewers connecting with every house. He waxed satirical:

> *To the Curious:*—The collection of filth and manure now lying in heaps, or which has been heaped in Wall, Pearl, Water, and Front Streets, near the Coffee-House, and left there, will astonish those who are fond of the wonderful, and pay them for the trouble of a walk there.

Sanitary ordinances were few, and apparently honored rather in the breach than in the observance. The city was full of unleashed dogs, and whenever in hot weather a hydrophobia panic occurred—which was every two or three years—they were slain by the scores. During one season they were dumped by cartloads into a vacant lot at Broadway and Bleecker Street, and buried so shallowly that neighboring residents had to keep their windows shut against the pestilential air. Slaughter-houses were tolerated in the midst of residential blocks, and the *Evening Post* early in the twenties began to call for their restriction. A correspondent related in 1825 how one butcher had recently purchased a small plot, and threatened to erect a shambles there unless the owners of valuable improvements near by paid him a large bonus —which they did; and how when another butcher wished

a piece of property, he put up a slaughterhouse adjoining it to compel the owner to sell at a low price. The ordinance against the summer sale of oysters was long a dead letter. "You can scarcely pass through any one street in the city," grumbled Coleman, "without running against a greasy table, with plates of sickly oysters displayed, well peppered with dust, and swarms of flies feeding upon them."

"The city of feasts and fevers" a visitor called New York—"feasts" in reference to the frequent banquets on turtle, venison, and Madeira, "fevers" in reference to the epidemics of yellow fever. There was one such epidemic in 1803. So great was the exodus that in September the population, which had been above 60,000, was found to be barely 38,000. "It is notorious," declared a writer in the *Evening Post* at this stage, "that notwithstanding the prevalence of a malignant disease, and when great exertions are made to check its destroying progress, the streets of this city are in a most noxious state; and will continue to increase in putridity, unless we are favored with some refreshing rains to clear them." The *Evening Post* removed its business office to an address on the outskirts of the city, and Coleman as far as possible edited it from the country. For a time, as he said, in most of the town there was "no business, no society, no means of subsistence even." New Yorkers could only set their teeth and wait for the frosts.

With Noah Webster during 1803 the *Evening Post* conducted a long-winded debate upon yellow fever; Coleman maintaining that it was always imported by some ship or immigrant, and Webster that it was spontaneously generated at home. Coleman was right, though of course absolutely ignorant of the reasons why he was right; and while the articles, which abound in mutual complaints of discourtesy, became very tiresome, Coleman's argument tended to a sound conclusion. He argued that the epidemics could be avoided by rigidly quarantining the city. It was always held contrary to public policy by many merchants and officials to breathe a word about yellow

fever till the last possible moment; for that drove trade to Boston or Philadelphia. But Coleman never failed to play the Dr. Stockmarr rôle courageously.

In 1809, for example, the paper braved the anger of business men by asserting on July 24 that, despite all denials, several deaths from the fever had just occurred in Brooklyn. Though an epidemic was raging in Cuba, ships from Havana had been allowed to come up from quarantine within four days of arrival, and had not been unloaded and cleansed according to the law. On July 28, by diligent scouting among doctors, Coleman was enabled to report a death from fever in Cherry Street and another in Beekman Street. He renewed his charge of malfeasance and neglect by the Health Officer at quarantine, a political appointee who pocketed $15,000 a year. Why, he demanded, were the laws as to the removal of the sick and the reporting of new cases not enforced? Four days later Mayor De Witt Clinton by proclamation forbade intercourse with the village of Brooklyn. At last! exclaimed the editor. But why not look to conditions within Manhattan itself, and make the ordinary physician obey the law? "If he does, one of the learned faculty will set a young cub of a student upon him to tear him in pieces for alarming the old women; and then there is another set who declare him a public enemy."

Just ten years later, remarking that "it has heretofore been the practice to stifle, as long as possible, the intelligence that the yellow fever existed in the city," Coleman served notice that if it broke out, as it did in August, he would advertise the fact. In 1822 there was a severe pestilence. The first case occurred on July 11 in a house on Rector Street, and was immediately made known to the Board of Health and to the officer deputed by law to give the first notice of its appearance. Yet it was concealed from the public for nearly a month, deaths occurring all the while, but no precautionary measures being taken; and before the epidemic ended, late in October, 388 persons died. The flight of the population toward the open parts of the island was unprecedented.

An immediate agitation was begun by the *Evening Post* for a different organization of the Board of Health. By an act two years previous, it consisted of such persons as the Common Council should appoint, a phrase which the Council always construed to mean that it should itself act as the Board. The members were quite untrained, while they were too numerous, and too busy with politics. Coleman suggested a Board of from five to seven qualified men, to be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council, and a reform actually did soon follow.

An irritant of the time, akin to automobile speedsters of to-day, lay in the Irish cartmen, who loved a race even more than a fight, and whom Coleman denounced the more vigorously because they were Democrats to a man. The bakers' boys were called "flying Mercuries"; to excite terror, said the *Evening Post* in 1805, they particularly delighted in crashing round a narrow street corner at a dead gallop, splashing those whom they did not graze. The journal in 1817 felt it proper to attack the practice of riding fast horses home from the blacksmith's without a bridle. Among the annoyances showing a lack of due city regulations was the appearance in 1820 of an ingenious mode of kite-flying. As flown in daytime, kites had always been admirably calculated to scare horses. Now they were being sent up at night by hordes of urchins, said the *Evening Post,* with a parachute and a little car affixed, the car containing lighted candles, and the whole so constructed that it could be separated from the kite at pleasure. They were miraculously adapted for setting roofs afire.

Most residential streets must have been fairly quiet; but they were not sufficiently so to suit the harassed editor. We find him in 1803 declaiming in order against the varied noises: "The measured ditty of the young sweep at daybreak, upon the chimney top; the tremendous nasal yell of 'Ye rusk!'; the sonorous horn that gives dreadful note of 'gingerbread!'; and the echoing sound of 'Hoboy!' at midnight, accompanied with its never-failing appeal to more senses than one." These "hoboy gentle-

men," whose profession was connected with Mrs. Warren's, were still an abomination in 1816, "bellowing out their filthy ditties" for two hours after eleven. As late as 1819, at the flush of dawn every morning, a stage traversed the whole length of Broadway northward, the guard merrily blowing his horn as it went and all the dogs barking. Hucksters, like beggars, seem at all times to have been troublesome. At any rate, Coleman in August, 1823, fulminated against them as to be found on every street and almost at every door, and as offering "almost everything that can be named, from a lady's leghorn hat to a shoestring, from a saddle to a cowskin, from a gold ring to a jewsharp." Busy householders and ordinary rent-paying tradesmen held them in equal dislike.

There was little of the moral censor or the preacher in the early *Evening Post*. Yet it did not neglect the city's manners. Temperance sentiment was then weak, but the journal lamented the excessive number of corner groggeries; for in New York licenses cost but 40 shillings, and liquor-selling was more extensive than in Boston or Philadelphia. In 1810 the Mayor and Excise Commissioners granted 3,500 licenses, and it was estimated that of the city's 14,000 families, no less than 2,000 gained a livelihood through the drink trade. Their little shops, many of them in cellars, were reported to exhibit perpetual scenes of riot and disorder. Six years later a writer in the *Evening Post* computed that there were more than 1,500 retail establishments for liquor, and added that it were better to let loose in the streets 1,500 hungry lions and tigers. The editor favored a heavy Federal tax to abate the evil.

The journal had the courage in 1818 to take a stand against lotteries, then resorted to not only for private gain, but to raise capital for bridges, canals, turnpikes, colleges, and churches. Their abolition would mean a sacrifice to the *Evening Post*, for in some periods of previous years they had furnished one-fifteenth or one-twentieth the whole advertising. But Coleman's heart was touched by the losses of the poor. "Look at the crowd

of poor, ragged wretches that beset the office-keeper's doors the morning after the day's drawing is over, waiting with their little slips in their hands, to hear their fate, and the yesterday's earnings ready to be given to the harpies that stand gaping for the pittance." He thought there were two palliatives short of abolition: first, to price the tickets so high that only people of means would gamble; and second, as in England, to compel managers to finish the drawings in a week or ten days, so as to end the pernicious practice of insuring the fate of tickets. Three years later, in 1821, an act passed providing that no new lotteries should be authorized.

The *Evening Post* said nothing against public executions, which during the first quarter of the century drew crowds of thousands; but it did cease at an early date, on principle, to publish long accounts of them. In June, 1819, it barely mentioned the fact that a great concourse gathered for the execution in Potter's Field, now Washington Square, of a negress named Rose Butler for attempted arson, and that the disappointment was keen when she was respited. Next month her actual hanging was recorded in five lines. Imprisonment for debt was repeatedly attacked by the editor.

Little was said by Coleman or any one else against cock-fighting and other inhuman amusements of the time. In 1807, however, the *Evening Post* opened its columns to a writer who described with indignant reprobation a bull-baiting which he had just attended. The bull was worried by dogs until, with one horn broken off, his ears in shreds, his tongue almost torn out, and his eyes filled with blood, he stopped fighting and had to be driven away to save his life. In other cities about 1815, notably Philadelphia, a great deal was being said against the employment of chimney sweeps, a set of dirty, underfed, uneducated urchins, who suffered from harsh masters and a dangerous calling. Coleman joined the chorus, and printed extended accounts of British inventions for the mechanical cleaning of flues. It is interesting to note that in 1805 the *Evening Post* was as willing to give up its

revenue from patent medicines as later that from lotteries. The editor, rendered angry by the death of a little girl who had taken a worthless nostrum, denounced "the quack medicines and quack advertisements which . . . so much distinguish and disgrace the city." Some daily papers were filled with advertisements of Restoratives, Essences, Balsams, Lozenges, and Purifiers warranted to cure all human ills; and the vendors had begun to publish in Maiden Lane a weekly organ, the *Remembrancer,* of which they distributed five hundred copies free.

Upon the contributions steadily made by invention and private enterprise to the comfort of the city many comments may be found in the *Evening Post.* Some of the most interesting relate to the old sailboat ferries, which were both slow and dangerous. Repeated accidents occurred early in the century. Following the capsizing of a Brooklyn ferry one bitter December day in 1803, with six passengers aboard, Coleman remarked that it was a notorious fact that such craft were placed in charge of fellows who were oftener half drunk than sober, and who, unable themselves to steer, committed the helm to any one who volunteered. He quoted the opinion of a competent sailor that in build these boats were the most dangerous ferries, especially in rough weather, of all he had seen throughout the world. The Paulus Hook (Jersey City) ferries, when contending against head winds and strong tides, required three hours to make a passage, and it was virtually impossible to get a horse and carriage across the North River. On summer Sundays, when many wished to go to Hoboken for picnics, and during the autumn racing on Long Island, prodigious queues would form at the piers. But on July 18, 1812, a steam ferry was set in motion between Manhattan and Paulus Hook by Robert Fulton. Surpassing all expectations, it proved able to accommodate six carriages and horses—driven easily aboard by a floating bridge—and 300 passengers at one time, and to cross during a calm in fourteen minutes, or against the tide in twenty. On July 27 some 1,500 people were ferried across and back; "a proud ex-

ample of the genius of our country," said Coleman.

When in the summer of 1807 Fulton's steamboat, the *Clermont,* began her regular service between New York and Albany, the *Evening Post* was jubilant; he had made only a few trips before it wanted the mail service transferred to him. It proudly recorded each new reduction in the time, until one trip from Albany down was made in 28 hours. Even in October great crowds gathered to watch the boat start:

> Among the thousands who viewed the scene [wrote "New York" on Oct. 2]permit a spectator to express his gratification at the sight, this morning, of the steamboat proceeding on her trip to Albany in a wind and swell of tide which appeared to bid defiance to every attempt to perform the voyage. The Steam Boat appeared to glide as easily and rapidly as though it were calm, and the machinery was not in the least impeded by the waves of the Hudson, the wheels moving with their usual velocity and effect. The experiment of this day removes every doubt of the practicability of the Steam Boat being able to work in rough weather.

Unfortunately, this particular trip was actually disastrous. Leaving the city at 10 a.m., the boat was forced by the gale and tide to tie up to the bank at noon, staying there overnight. Next morning, before reaching Tarrytown, she ran into a small sloop, and one of her paddle-wheels was torn away. It was 10 o'clock on the morning of Oct. 4 before she set her stiff and hungry passengers ashore in Albany. She was immediately withdrawn, and during the winter was almost completely rebuilt.

The journal appreciatively noticed the opening of steamship navigation on the Raritan and Delaware Rivers in 1809, as a means of shortening the trip between New York and Philadelphia. In March, 1815, it gave an account of the first trip through Hell Gate and the Sound to New Haven. The steamship *Fulton* left New York shortly after 5 a. m., and, the weather being bad and the wood for fuel poor, did not reach her destination till 4:30 that afternoon. Eight or nine hours would ordinarily be sufficient. The ease with which Hell Gate, theretofore thought impassable by steam, was navigated,

amazed every one. No less than $90,000 had been spent on the boat. "We believe it may with truth be affirmed that there is not in the world such accommodations afloat," wrote a correspondent. "Indeed, it is hardly possible to conceive that anything of the kind can exceed the *Fulton* in elegance and convenience."

By the beginning of 1816 the *Evening Post* was giving much space to the possibilities of coal gas as an illuminant. A schoolmaster named Griscom lectured the evening of Jan. 26 on the light, the audience including the Mayor, Recorder, many aldermen, and prominent business men. He demonstrated the use of gas, argued that it would cost only half as much as lamps or candles, and showed that it gave a superior brilliancy without smoke or odor. At this time, as Coleman emphasized, Londoners had extensively employed coal gas for four or five years. During the summer of 1816 a successful trial was made in Baltimore. At last, seven years later, the *Evening Post* was able editorially to direct attention to the advertisement of the New York Gas Company, which was just issuing $200,000 worth of stock, and which the city government had given a franchise for lighting all the town south of Grand Street for the next thirty years.

But the use of old-fashioned illuminants involved no such hardships as did the city's exclusive dependence, when Hamilton's journal began its career, upon wood for fuel. As regularly as the Hudson froze and snowdrifts blocked the roads, prices soared. In January, 1806, for example, hickory rose from the normal price of $3.50 a load (three loads made a cord) to $7, and some speculators even tried to get $8. In 1821, after a severe snowstorm, $5 was charged for a load of oak, and $7.50 for better woods. It was with unusual satisfaction, therefore, that in the summer of 1823 the journal said that it "congratulated the public on the near prospect of this city being supplied with coal, dug from that immense range" of potential mines lately discovered in Pennsylvania. The new Schuylkill Coal Company and the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company were making preparations

to ship the anthracite; and Coleman hoped that the city's fuel bill of $700,000 or $800,000 would be cut in half.

Little criticism was given the watch or the firemen, though neither fully protected the city. In 1812 the journal very properly attacked the "snug watch-boxes" in which the police were wont to sit, and demanded that the men be warmly dressed and kept constantly on patrol. During 1818 its complaints of the insufficiency of the police redoubled, and in 1823, when the total annual expense to the city was $56,000, Coleman asserted that for almost the whole ward surrounding Coenties Slip, with many valuable warehouses, there was but one watchman. The editor, using the adjectives "noisome," "beastly," "filthy," spoke of the jail and bridewell in 1812 as standing reproaches to New York. He also condemned "the abominable practises of the marshals, constables, low attornies, and a number of other wretches" who hung about the courts and bridewell to prey upon arrested men. The *Evening Post* at intervals till 1820 complained of a lack of inspection in public markets; while with almost equal regularity it scored the neglect of the Battery, whose only caretakers were too often the hogs.

The one reform of the time which the paper opposed was the aldermanic decree in the spring of 1820 that no more interments should take place south of Canal, Sullivan, and Grand Streets. This was good sense; but Coleman, as a spokesman for the wealthy merchant families, objected because it rendered many family burial plots or vaults worthless, and because the nearest available cemeteries were three and a half miles from the city.

II

We have already named the daily newspapers which existed when Hamilton and his associates established the *Evening Post.* The oldest of the five was the *Daily Gazette,* which had been founded as a weekly in 1725; the *Post* made six, Dr. Irving's *Morning Chronicle,* patronized by Burr, seven, and the *Public Advertiser* eight. In 1807 the whole list of city publications was as follows:

Federalist:—*Evening Post; Commercial Advertiser; Daily Gazette; Weekly Inspector;* and *People's Friend.*

Clintonian:—*American Citizen; Public Advertiser;* and *Bowery Republican.*

Lewisite (Morgan Lewis was the inheritor of Burr's mantle): —*Morning Chronicle.*

Neutral:—*Mercantile Advertiser; New York Spy; Price Current.*

Literary:—*Monthly Register; Ladies' Weekly Miscellany; Weekly Museum.*

Of the dailies, the *Evening Post* was the most important; its scope was the widest, its editorials were the best-written, and its commercial news was as good as that obtained by Lang or Belden. Yet even it had, at the beginning of its second year, but 1,104 subscribers for the daily edition, and 1,632, chiefly out-of-town, for the weekly. New Yorkers then regarded newspapers as a luxury, not a necessity. Since a year's subscription cost $8, or ten days' wages for a workingman, the poor simply could not afford it. Thrifty householders exchanged sheets, and at the taverns they were read to wide circles. The journal was never sold on the streets, and if Coleman had caught an urchin peddling it he would have boxed his ears for a fool; whenever a visitor at the City Hotel, or a merchant particularly pleased by some long editorial, wished a copy, he not only had to pay the heavy price of 12½ cents, but had to go to the printer's room for it. Coleman no more thought of his circulation as variable from day to day than does the editor of a country weekly at the present time.

We must remember that the dailies of old New York not only had small and fixed circulations, but that it was not their editors' intention to make them purveyors of news in anything like the modern sense. Coleman in his prospectus made no promise of enterprise in supplying intelligence. An editor was glad to give a completer notification of new auctions or cargoes than any rival, or to be first to strike the party note upon a political event; but a news "beat" was unknown.

It was said of the *Commercial Advertiser* that wars might be fought and won, dynasties rise and fall, quakes and floods ravage the earth, and it would never mention them; but that if it failed to list a single ship arrival or sailing, the editor would meditate blowing out his brains. Several New York newspapers of 1800-1820 were principally vehicles of political opinion; several were principally organs for commercial information and advertisements; and some were a mingling of the two. A modicum of news was thrown in to add variety, and though it tended to grow greater, even by 1825 it was only a modicum. One great difficulty was that there was no machinery for news-gathering. Coleman was his own reporter for local events, and had no money to hire an assistant; while almost all news from outside was taken from exchanges, or from private letters whose contents were communicated to him by friends. The mails were slow and irregular. A still larger difficulty was that the news sense had been developed neither by editors nor by the public to whose demands the editors catered.

Illustrations of what would now seem an incredible blindness to important events might be multiplied indefinitely. A New Yorker who wishes to find in old files a real account of the first trial of Fulton's *Clermont* will search in vain. No report worthy of the name was written, the brief newspaper references being meager and unsatisfactory. Yet there was much interest in Fulton, and the *Evening Post* of July 22, sixteen days before the experiment with the steamboat, did give a good account of his successful effort in the harbor to use torpedoes. More than twenty years later the *Evening Post* carried an advance notice of the opening of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, the real beginning of American railroad traffic; but, like most other papers, it gave no report of the actual occurrence.

Sometimes news was deliberately rejected. In 1805 Coleman published a long series of articles discussing Jefferson's second inaugural address, but the address itself he never printed; it being assumed that interested men

could find it in the Democratic press. Again, when in the autumn of 1812 a gang of robbers entered eight of the largest stores of the city in succession, during a few days, and took goods valued at $3,000, the editor made no effort to place the particulars before his readers; could they not ask the neighborhood gossips? He contented himself with a warning to the public and to the watch. On Jan. 10, 1803, early in the evening, the house of a well-to-do tallow chandler named Willis, in Roosevelt Street, was robbed. Next day the paper made only a casual allusion to it, naïvely adding: "For particulars see the advertisement in this evening's *Post.*" The obliging Mr. Willis, in advertising a reward, had stated the details of his loss, which came to $2,500 or $2,600 in cash.

But on other occasions the editor made an earnest but unavailing effort to procure the news. A single issue of 1826 affords two examples: private letters in town had brought hints of a duel between Randolph and Clay, but it proved impossible to verify the reports, while of a fire that morning in Chambers Street no accurate facts were ascertainable. In September, 1809, the Common Council dismissed William Mooney, a Tammany leader, from the superintendency of the almshouse, and men surmised that the grounds were corruption. A few days later Coleman published the following notice:

> *Information Wanted*:—I have been waiting some days in hopes that some person would furnish me with facts which led to the disaster which on Monday last befell the Grand Sachem, who lately presided over the almshouse. Surely the citizens have a right to be informed of such things. Will any person, acquainted with the circumstances, communicate them to the editor?

Unfortunately, no informed person came forward. During the last days of the War of 1812, commercial firms constantly tried to obtain private news of the progress of the peace negotiations. There is a pathetic note of frustration in the *Evening Post's* item of Nov. 29, 1814: "Considering the public entitled to all the information in our power, we barely mention that there is a

London paper of the 28th ult. in town, which is kept from the public eye at present. We will not conjecture what the contents are, but merely venture to say that it is probably something of moment."

Nor was the news, collected under such great disadvantages, quite as accurate as news is now required to be. In August, 1805, the evening papers caused much stir and conjecture in the little city by announcing that Jefferson had called the Senate together upon important foreign business. Next day they explained that this false report had originated with a mischievous young man who had arrived from Philadelphia in the mail stage, and whose name they would like to learn. Coleman was somewhat embarrassed two years later to have to state:

> We are requested by Mr. Wright to contradict the account published yesterday of his being lost in crossing the North River.

When in 1810 the town was on tiptoe to learn the President's January message to Congress, or as Coleman called it, "the great War-Whoop," two conflicting summaries reached the evening papers at once; one communicated by a gentleman who arrived direct from Washington, and one obtained through the Philadelphia *Aurora* from a commercial express rider. While waiting fuller news, they could only print both and let readers take their choice. During the spring of 1812, with war impending, the press was replete with mere gossip and rumor, sometimes well founded, more often baseless. As late as 1826 there occurred a striking illustration of the inaccuracy of much that passed for foreign news, and of the difficulty which truth experienced in overtaking error. The Greek revolution had broken out in 1821, and the massacres of Chios and Constantinople, the victory of Marco Bozzaris, and the death of Byron had kindled a flame of phil-hellenism throughout America. On April 26, 1826, the Greek stronghold of Missolonghi was captured. Despite this, late in May there reached New York a circumstantial account of the relief of Missolonghi, the slaughter of the Turks, the death of their hated com-

mander Ibrahim, and the brightening prospect of Greek liberty, all of which the newspapers spread forth under such captions as "Glorious News From Greece." Early in June this was contradicted by the true news. Nevertheless, wrote Coleman on July 20, "on taking up a late Tennessee newspaper we find that the 'Glorious News' has just reached our western neighbors and that they are now only beginning to rejoice at the deliverance of Missolonghi."

We can most vividly appreciate just how far the early newspapers succeeded—for the *Evening Post* was typical of the best sheets—and how far they failed as purveyors of current information, by listing the materials presented in a single week chosen at random. In the seven days May 9-14 inclusive, 1803, Coleman published the following intelligence:

FOREIGN	DOMESTIC
War Rumored Between Britain and France	Fire in Troy, N. Y.
Monroe Arrives at Havre	Editor Duane Apologizes for Libel
French Hunt Haitians With Bloodhounds	Cheetham Fined $200 for Libel
Two Columns on British Penal Reform	Column on Harlem Races
French Prefect Reaches New Orleans	Paine Publishes Letter from Jefferson
British Give South Africa to Dutch	Grainger's Record as Postmaster-General
Demands of Dey of Algiers on Powers	Fire in New York Coach Factory
More Rumors of Anglo-French War	Two Benefits at Local Theatre
Agrarian Violence in Ireland	Election Dispute in Ulster County
London Stock-Market Fluctuations	Election Incident at Pawling
European Trade Rivalries in Levant	Advance Sale of Marshall's "Washington"
French Troops Concentrate in Holland	XYZ Affair Reviewed

This was absolutely all, and many of these subjects were treated in only a few lines, and with obvious haziness and inexactitude. It is plain that the week's budget did carry much illumination to the public mind; but it is also plain that only a tiny part of the world's activities were being covered, that city news was appallingly neglected,

and that a modern journal treating each day hundreds of subjects would then have been inconceivable.

Yet the press could boast of occasional feats of news presentation which would do credit to journalism even now. The political meetings of each party were almost always well reported by its own party organs. In 1807 Burr's trial was covered for the *Evening Post* by a special correspondent whose reports were dry—there was no description of scene or personages, no attention to emphasis, and little direct quotation of counsel or witnesses—but were also expert, comprehensive, and minute. It is well known that the greatest of American earthquakes occurred in 1811 in the Missouri and Arkansas country just west of the Mississippi. The *Evening Post* was fortunate enough to obtain a three-column account of it, vivid, intelligent, and thrilling, from the pen of an observer who witnessed it from a point near New Madrid. The special Albany letters were fair; for years the *Evening Post* derived occasional bits of inside information from Federalist Congressmen, and made good use of them; and its London correspondence, which began in 1819 with an account of the Holkham sheep-shearing, was on a level with much London correspondence of to-day. One of the most extravagant items in the *Evening Post's* first account book is $50 for getting President Madison's annual message of 1809 to New York by "pony express." An attempt was made to use carrier pigeons when the House in 1824 elected J. Q. Adams President, but it proved a failure.

After the commencement of the War of 1812, as we should expect, much more assiduous attention was paid to news. From five columns, the space allotted rapidly rose to six, seven, and even eight. Almost always, of course, it was very late news. Word of the first disaster of the war, Hull's surrender at Detroit, was published by the *Evening Post* on Aug. 31, 1812. The capitulation has occurred on the 16th, and the news came by two routes. An express rider had carried it from Sandusky to Cleveland, and thence it was brought by a postal car-

rier to Warren, Pa., on the 22d, so that Pittsburgh had it on the 23d, and Philadelphia on the night of the 29th. At the same time it was coming by a southern path. Hull sent a messenger direct to Washington, who arrived in the capital on the 28th, and whose dispatches were relayed northward.

Hard on the heels of this blow came cheering news. The *Constitution* met the *Guerriere* on Aug. 19, and Capt. Hull's victory was given to the public by Boston papers of the 31st, and New York papers of Sept. 2. Thus both the defeat and the victory were known to most Northerners about a fortnight after they took place. Of "the fall of Fort Dearborn at Chicagua," on Aug. 15, the famous massacre, New Yorkers did not learn until Sept. 24, when a brief dispatch from Buffalo was inserted in an obscure corner by Coleman. All Washington news at this time still required two full days for transmission, and often more. When Madison on Nov. 3, 1812, sent a message to Congress at high noon, the *Evening Post* announced that it and the *Gazette* had clubbed together to pay for a pony express, and that it hoped to issue an extra with the news the following afternoon. It also stated that the previous evening an express had passed through the city towards New England, reputed to be bearing the substance of the message, and to have traversed the 340 miles from Washington in nineteen hours. Next day the editor stated that the express had really come from Baltimore only, and that it had been paid for by gamblers to bear the first numbers drawn in the Susquehanna lottery in advance of the mails. These numbers had been delivered to the gamblers in New York, who went to the proper offices and took insurance to the amount of $30,000 against their coming up that day; but the offices refused payment. It was nearly thirty-six hours before Madison's message reached New York from Washington, and it was not printed until Nov. 5.

Late in the fall occurred an interesting example of the constant conflict of that day between rumor and fact. Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer sacrificed a force of 900

men at Queenstown Heights, just across the Niagara River, on Oct. 13. Seven days later the *Evening Post* in a column headed "postscript" gave the city its first intimation that a battle had occurred. Just as the paper at two o'clock was going to press, it said, the Albany boat had come in with word from Geneva that an army surgeon had arrived there from Buffalo, and had reported a great American victory—the capture of Queenstown and 1,500 prisoners. But the steamer also brought a rival report from the Canandaigua *Repository* of a disaster, in which hundreds had been killed and hundreds captured. The city could only wait and fear as the following day passed without news. Finally, on the afternoon of the 22d, the Albany steamboat hove in sight again, and a great crowd thronging the pier was aghast to learn that Van Rensselaer had lost a battle and a small army.

In the closing days of the war this episode was reversed, the rumor of bad news being followed by a truthful report of good. On Jan. 20, 1815, the whole city was in suspense as to the fate of New Orleans. Nothing had been heard from Louisiana for a month, and three mails were overdue, which boded ill, for every one knew that Sir Edward Pakenham and his 16,000 British veterans were ready to move upon the place. "It is generally believed here that if an attack has been made on Orleans, the city has fallen," said the *Evening Post*. "But some doubt whether the British, having the perfect command of all the waters about the city, and having it in their power to command the river above, will not resort to a more bloodless, but a certain method of reducing the city." On Jan. 23 the *Evening Post* published some inconclusive information received in a letter from a New Orleans judge, dated just before the preliminary and indecisive battle of Dec. 23. "We have cause of apprehension," Coleman wrote, "that to-morrow's mail will bring tidings of the winding up of the catastrophe." New Yorkers were particularly concerned because city merchants owned a great part of the $3,200,000 worth of cotton stored in New Orleans. But a week,

ten days, and two weeks passed while little news was procured and the tension grew steadily greater. Finally, on the morning of Feb. 6, three mails were received at once, with New Orleans letters bearing dates as late as Jan. 13, five days after Jackson had bloodily repulsed Packenham. The tidings fell upon New York with a tremendous shock of surprise and joy, and the *Evening Post* hastened to publish them in two columns and with its closest approach to the yet uninvented headline.

Under the stress of war the first news with conscious color, pathos, and strong human interest began to be written. The earliest account filled with human touches dealt with an incident of the privateering of which New York harbor was a busy center. The privateer Franklin, two months after hostilities began, returned from the Nova Scotia coast with a strange prize—an old, crazy, black-sided fishing schooner of thirty-eight tons, less than half the size of a good Hudson River market boat. Coleman, going aboard, found the owner a fine gray-haired woman, a widow. The little craft was her all. Wrapped in a rusty black coat as tattered as its sails, "she cried as if her heart would break" while she told the editor how she had left four children behind her and had pleaded with her captor not to be taken so far from home. It need not be said that the publicity Coleman gave to this incident helped persuade the captain of the privateer that honor obliged him to send the fisherwoman back.

Two years later occurred an incident the humorous values of which the *Evening Post* did not miss. Mr. Wise, part-proprietor of the Museum in New York, with a mixture of patriotic and business motives, had an extensive panorama painted of the glorious Yankee naval victories of 1812 and 1813. Having got all the New York sixpences that he could with it, he packed it up together with the lamps and other fixtures for its exhibition, and a valuable hand-organ, and set sail for Charleston to show it there. On the second day out from Sandy Hook, the British frigate *Forth* captured the vessel.

Greatly amused, the commander promptly set the panorama up for inspection:

So valuable did the captain of the Forth consider his prize, that in the evening of the day he made his capture, he illuminated his ships with the lamps belonging to the panorama, and kept up a merry tune upon the organ. In the course of their merriment they asked Mr. Wise if it could play Yankee Doodle. Upon his answering in the affirmative, they immediately set the organ to that tune, and in a sailor step made the decks shake. The captain of the Forth said he intended to take the paintings to Halifax and make a fortune by exhibiting them.

But, remarked Coleman patriotically:

The frigate President, we understand, is preparing for a cruise now under the command of Decatur, and if they will have a little patience we will furnish another historical subject for their amusement.

As the war drew near its close, sometimes even ten columns of news were furnished, and on several occasions, as that of Gen. Hull's trial, a one-sheet supplement was issued. The first cartoon in the *Evening Post* was evoked on April 18, 1812, by the act of Congress cutting off foreign trade by land. It showed two large tree-trunks in close juxtaposition, one labeled "Embargo" and the other "Non-Importation Act," with a fat snake held immovable between them; from the snake's mouth were issuing the words, "What's the matter now?" and from its tail the answer, "I can't get out!" Such wit was about equal to that of the second cartoon, on April 25, 1814, which showed a terrapin (the Embargo was often called "the terrapin policy") flat upon its back, expiring as Madison stabbed it with a saber, but still clinging to the President with claws and teeth. Below was some doggerel expressing the determination of the terrapin to hold on until it dragged Madison down and slew him. Evidently readers were obtuse, for the next day appeared a solemn "Explanation of the emblematic figures in yesterday's paper." But as yet neither news nor cartoons were

published on the first page, which was sacred, as in English papers of to-day, to advertisements.

Except for one advance intimation, the news of peace might have been as unexpected as that of the victory of New Orleans. This intimation came on Feb. 9, in a curiously roundabout manner. A privateer cruising in British waters captured a prize which bore London newspapers dating to Nov. 28, and carried them to Salem, Mass., whence their contents were reprinted all over the North. They contained the speech of the Prince Regent on Nov. 11, and the proceedings of the Commons immediately afterwards, holding out hope for a prompt ending of the war.

The news of peace itself electrified the city two days later, reaching it by the British sloop *Favorite,* which bore one of the secretaries of the American legation in London, at eight o'clock on Saturday evening. No journal was so indecorous as to issue a special Sunday edition, but on Monday the *Evening Post* contained a full account of the delirium of rejoicing with which the intelligence was greeted. Nearly every window in the principal streets was illuminated, and Broadway was filled with laughing, huzzaing, exalted people, carrying torches or candles, and jamming the way for two hours. On Tuesday the *Evening Post* recorded that sugar had fallen from $26 a hundred-weight to $12.50, tea from $2.25 a pound to $1, and tin from $80 a box to $25, while specie, which had been at 22 per cent. premium, was now only at 2 per cent., and six per cent. Government stock had risen from 76 to 86. The wharves were an animated scene, ship advertisements were pouring in, and "it is really wonderful to see the change produced in a few hours in the City of New York."

And what of the Napoleonic wars? All European news was then obtained from files of foreign papers, some of which came to New York journals direct, and some of which were supplied by merchants and shippers. It was usual, whenever a packet arrived with a fresh batch, to cut the domestic news to a few paragraphs, stop any series of editorial articles in hand, and for several days

fill the columns with extracts and summaries. Though in 1812 a ship came from Belfast in the remarkable time of twenty-two days, forty days was the average from London or Liverpool, and European news was hence from one to two months late. Sometimes a traveler, and frequently a ship-captain, brought news by word of mouth.

A detailed account from the London prints of Napoleon's marriage at Vienna was not published by the *Evening Post* till ten weeks after the event. Wellington stormed Badajos on April 7, 1812, and the *Evening Post* announced the fact on June 11, or more than two months later; while the battle of Salamanca that summer, where Wellington "beat forty thousand in forty minutes," was not known for sixty-six days, the news coming in part through a traveler who arrived from Cadiz at Salem, and was interviewed by a correspondent there. It was the middle of October when the armies of Napoleon and the Allies took position for the battle of Leipsic, and Coleman was not able to publish his three-column summary from a London paper till just after New Year's. When the description of the battle of Toulouse came in, there occurred an office tragedy:

> Here ought to follow an account of a great battle between Lord Wellington and Soult [explained Coleman after an abrupt break in the news], and other selections amounting to about two columns, but it being necessary to get it set up abroad, the boy in bringing it home blundered down in the street, and threw the types into irretrievable confusion. It will be given to-morrow.

After that wily and selfish old invalid Bourbon, Louis XVIII, given his crown by the Allies, visited London in state, a spectator sent a vivid account of his triumphal passage up Piccadilly to the *Evening Post*. Louis had passed so near that this tourist could have touched him. "He is very corpulent, with a round face, dark eyes, prominent features, the character of countenance much like that of the portraits of the other Louises; a pleasant face; his eyes were suffused with tears." Then came the Hundred Days; and the greatest European news of all was thus introduced on Aug. 2, 1815:

IMPORTANT

We received from our correspondent at Boston, by this morning's mail, the following important news, which we hasten to lay before our readers:

From Our Correspondent,
Office of the Boston *Daily Advertiser,*
July 31, 1815.

A gentleman has just arrived in town from a vessel which he left in the harbor, bringing London dates from June 24. The principal article is an official dispatch of Lord Wellington's, dated Waterloo, June 19, giving a detailed account of a general engagement.

There followed Wellington's succinct dispatch. Its modesty of tone misled many New York supporters of Napoleon, who made heavy bets that Wellington had really been drubbed, and who when fuller news came had to pay them.

Even in the third decade of the century news of every kind was unconscionably slow. The *Evening Post* of June 20, 1825, came out late because the presses had been held till the last minute in the vain hope of giving particulars of the dedication of the Bunker Hill monument on the 17th; the steamboat from New London having arrived without any intelligence. Only on the next day was a narrative carried, and though it filled four columns, it contained no extracts from Webster's oration.

One year later one of the most impressive coincidences in our history afforded a striking illustration of the long wait forced upon each section of the United States for information from outside its borders. The fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was celebrated with fervor in every hamlet and city, though in New York a storm of wind and rain interfered with the ceremonies. Every American thought of the two aged ex-Presidents, one the author of the Declaration, the other the radical patriot who had done most to forward it in Congress. At 1 o'clock in the afternoon Jefferson died at Monticello. At 6 o'clock John Adams, after remark-

ing that every report of the celebratory cannon had added five minutes to his life, passed away at Quincy. Which news would reach New York first? The *Evening Post* published the death of Adams on the seventh, and the demise of Jefferson on the eighth. Then began to come evidence that the two circles of intelligence were more and more overlapping each other, and, on the tenth, Coleman commented:

> The newspapers of the North and East are filled with remarks upon the death of John Adams, while those from the South are equally filled with the obsequies of Jefferson, neither section having yet heard of the loss sustained by the other. How much is the surprise at each extremity of the country destined to be increased by the information which is now traveling from the South to the North, and from the North to the South! Last evening, in all probability, President Adams heard of the death of his father; at about the same moment news of the decease of Jefferson must have reached Quincy.

To a large proportion of subscribers—the wholesalers, retailers, auctioneers, shippers, and manufacturers—the most interesting news was generally to be found in the column headed "Evening Post Marine List," and in the advertisements. The shipping news was at this time collected with the utmost attention to accuracy and completeness, for it was as much one of the journal's grounds for claiming a superior position as its financial news became after the Civil War. A special employee obtained it from the custom house, counting rooms, and wharves, and regularly gathered some dozens or even scores of such items as the following:

> CLEARED, Brig Caroline, Lee, Teneriffe, by N. L. and G. Griswold; schrs. Miranda, Sayre, St. Augustine, by the captains, Linnet, Paterson, Shelburne, by do.
>
> ARRIVED, The schr. Red-Bird, Walker, in 12 days from Washington, N. C., with 447 bbl. of naval stores, 700 bushels of corn, for Mr. Gardiner, of Rhode Island. Spoke, five leagues from the capes of Virginia, the schr. Farmer's Daughter, 24 days from Port Morant for Marblehead, the captain informed that he saw a large ship under jury masts, standing in for Havanna;

being about two leagues distant; supposed to be English. At the same time, a brig to leeward, with her main-top-masts gone and both pumps agoing; she had black sides and supposed to be an eastern brig, & was making for Havanna.

Sloop Harriet, Lynds, 60 days from Jamaica, with rum, to George Pratt. Captain L. has experienced the most distressing weather, and his crew would have starved had it not been for supplies received from 3 vessels which he fell in with. On the 5th of Nov. he met with the schr. Goliath, Pinkham (arrived at this port), then out 35 days; and though Captain P. was then short, and on allowance, he humanely divided, as it were, his last mouthful with Captain Lynds. Nov. 10, in lat. 33, fell in with the bark Calliope, 46 days from Kingston for Norfolk—gave her some water, and received some bread and beef. Nov. 14, in lat. 36, got some bread from the ship Lovina, 18 days from Savannah for Philadelphia.

Then, as now, advertisements were the principal support of newspapers, though they yielded a revenue that seems pitiful by modern standards. Until some years after Coleman died in 1828, merchants paid $40 a year for the privilege of advertising, a subscription being thrown in. It was left to their sense of fairness not to present advertisements of undue length, and "display ads" were of course unknown. The monthly rate was $3.50, four insertions could be had for a dollar, and one for fifty cents. A study of the first ledger of the *Evening Post*, for the years 1801-1804, shows that the largest receipts from a single firm were $276.49, from Bronson and Chauncey. The publishers, T. and J. Swords, paid in eighteen months $157.55—they were destined to be good customers of the *Evening Post* for decades. But nearly all the accounts were for small amounts. James Roosevelt, the wealthy Pearl Street merchant, paid $57.37 between the beginning of 1802 and Nov. 16, 1803; Minturn and Barker, representing two families long prominent in business, paid $39.55 in the same period; and Robert Lenox paid $91.50. This ledger is a virtual directory of all important business and professional men of the city, in which we meet entries of payments for subscriptions by Hamilton, Burr, Rufus King, Oliver Wol-

cott, Brockholst Livingston, Morgan Lewis, and many other notables.

Ordinarily, from 1801 to 1825, of the twenty short columns all but four or five were devoted to advertisements. Shipping, auctions, wholesale stores (seldom retail), lotteries, legal notices, and the theater furnished most of the patronage, but the range of advertising was surprising. In 1802 we find such insertions as these:

ST. CROIX RUM.—50 puncheons, just arrived per the brig Harriet, from St. Croix, now landing at Schermerhorn's Wharf. For sale by CURRIE & WHITNEY, 47 Front Street.

FOR SALE.—A likely Negro Wench, 16 years old—sold for no fault. For terms, enquire of WILLIAM LEAYCROFT, 109 Liberty Street.

TAKE NOTICE

LOTTERY TICKETS to be had at the Book and Stationery Store of NAPHTALI JUDAH, No. 84 Maiden-Lane. Tickets in the Lottery No. 1, for the encouragement of Literature—$25, the highest prize—for sale in Halves, Quarters, and Eighth Parts. The Lottery will positively commence drawing in this city on the first Tuesday in February next. Owing to the great demand for Tickets, they will rise from the present price of six dollars and a half, in a few days.

Editor Coleman would have lifted his brows had he been told that within a little more than a century St. Croix rum, lotteries to encourage literature, and the sale of likely negro wenches would all be outlawed.

The circulation of the *Evening Post* rose only slowly, and like all the other New York newspapers of the time, until after the War of 1812 it found the struggle for existence a harsh one. At the beginning of 1804 the whole group, except the youngest and weakest, Irving's *Morning Chronicle,* concerted to raise their yearly subscription price from $8 to $10; this meaning, in the instance of Coleman's journal, the difference between $9,600 and $12,000 a year. The reason alleged was the heavy increase in the cost of labor and materials. Journeymen printers, recently paid $6 a week, were now ask-

ing $8; the faithfullest clerk and most dogged collector in town could once have been had for $300 a year, and now any such employee wanted $400; while paper had risen until it cost the editor $7,000 to $8,000 a year. The *Gazette* and the *Mercantile Advertiser* caused much ill-feeling when they immediately broke faith and reverted to the $8 rate, but Coleman stood by his guns. To help in holding his subscribers, he advanced his printing hour from four p. m. to two. Year after year there was a slight increase in the daily circulation, though it hardly kept pace with the growth of population; in 1815 it stood at 1,580 copies daily, and in 1820 at 1,843.

Arrears long cost New York editors the same sleepless nights which they cost the owners of some ill-managed country journals to-day. City residents paid regularly, for they could be reached through the ten-pound court if they did not; but in 1805 Coleman despairingly affirmed that "not one in a hundred" of the subscribers to the semi-weekly were prompt. In some centers, as Boston, from $500 to $1,000 was due the *Post* and *Herald*, and in Kingston, Canada, more than $60 was owed merely for postage. "The loss that arises from neglected arrearages would amount to not less than 30 per cent.," lamented the editor. It was necessary to send a collector up through New York and New England to Upper Canada, stopping for money all along the mail routes.

When Michael Burnham took charge, on Nov. 16, 1806, business affairs were greatly systematized; a fact of which we find evidence both in the disappearance of complaints of arrears, and in the ledgers and a curious old account book, 1801-1810. These accounts throw much light on mechanical details. A frequent charge for "skins" presumably refers to the buckskins which were cut and rolled into balls, soaked in ink, and then used by the printers' devils to pound the forms and thus ink the type. Almost daily charges appear for candles and quill pens. The journal seems to have paid many of the expenses of apprentices, for there are numerous entries for "cloathing" and for board at $3 a week. Coleman drew

upon the till occasionally, as is shown by an item of May 25, 1809: "Boots for Mr. Coleman, $10." But all the improvements that Burnham made in the business management did not save Coleman at times before 1810 from half-resolving to let the *Evening Post* die and to return to the bar again; in the year named, when he was trying to arrange his English debts, he confessed such a hesitation. When Duane of the *Aurora* charged that the Federalist newspapers in seaport towns were bribed "by support in the form of *mercantile advertisements*" to oppose all Jefferson's measures, Coleman bitterly replied that Federalist merchants actually neglected their press. Taking up a copy of the chief Federalist organ in Philadelphia, and one of the chief neutral journal there, he found six ship advertisements in the former and forty in the latter; while "on a particular day not long since the New York *Gazette* had eighty-five new advertisements, the *Mercantile Advertiser* sixty-one, and the *Evening Post* nine."

But after the Embargo and the war the skies slowly brightened, not so much because of the growing circulation as because of the more remunerative advertisements. It was not the $40-a-year advertising that paid, but the single "ads" inserted at the new rate of 75 cents a "square." There were now many more of these. Because of the rapid growth of the city a brisk trade had sprung up in Brooklyn and Manhattan real estate, which by 1820 often engrossed from one-eighth to one-fourth the whole paper. Steamboats had come, and from Capt. Vanderbilt's little *Nautilus,* which left Whitehall daily for Staten Island at 10, 3, and 6:30, charging twenty-five cents a trip, to the big *Chancellor Livingston* running to Albany, and the boat *Franklin,* which offered excursions to Sandy Hook, with a green turtle dinner, for $2, all were advertising. Competing stage-coach lines were eager to impress the public with their speedy schedules; advertising that you could leave the City Hotel at 2 p. m., packed six inside and eight outside a gaudily painted

vehicle, and be at Judd's Tavern in Philadelphia at 5 a. m. the next day.

Competition continued keen, for while weak newspapers died, new journals were constantly being established. The most important of these were Charles Holt's *Columbian,* established in 1808 as a Clintonian sheet; the *National Advocate,* founded in 1813 and edited for a time by Henry Wheaton, later known as a diplomat, who supported Madison; and the *American,* an evening journal first published in the spring of 1819, and edited by Charles King, later president of Columbia College. But the *Evening Post* kept well to the front, as is shown by a table of comparative circulations in May, 1816:

Mercantile Advertiser, 2000	Gardiner's *Courier,* 980
Daily Gazette, 1750	*Columbian,* 825
Evening Post, 1600	*National Advocate,* 875
Commercial Advertiser, 1200	

The circulation of the *Mercantile Advertiser,* we are told by Thurlow Weed, who was then working on the *Courier,* was considered enormous. It seldom had more than one and a half or two columns of news, while Lang's *Gazette* frequently carried only a half column; so that the *Evening Post* was clearly the leading newspaper. People in the early twenties regarded it as a well established institution. Its editor had become one of the lesser notables of the city, like Dr. Hosack and Dr. Mitchill; and we are informed by a contemporary that he "was pronounced by his advocates a field-marshal in literature, as well as politics." Poor as the newspapers of that time seem by modern standards, the *Evening Post* when compared with the London *Times* or the London *Morning Post* (for which Lamb and Coleridge wrote) was not discreditable to New York; it was not so well written, but it was as large and as energetic in news-gathering and editorial utterance.

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE AND DRAMA IN THE EARLY "EVENING POST"

THE infancy of the *Evening Post* coincided with the rise of the Knickerbocker school of letters, with which its relations were always intimate. Its first editor delighted in his old age to speak of his friendship with Irving, Halleck, Drake, and Paulding; while the second editor, Bryant, escaped inclusion with the Knickerbockers only by the fact that his poetry is too individual and independent to fit into any school at all.

A mellow atmosphere hangs over the literary annals of New York early in the last century. We think of young Irving wandering past the stoops of quaint gabled houses, where the last representatives of the old Dutch burghers puffed their long clay pipes; or taking country walks within view of the broad Tappan Zee and the summer-flushed Catskills, halting whenever he could get a good wife to favor him with her version of the legends of the countryside. We think of that brilliant rainbow which Halleck stopped to admire one summer evening in front of a coffee-house near Columbia College, exclaiming: "If I could have my wish, it should be to lie in the lap of that rainbow and read Tom Campbell"; of Paulding, Henry Brevoort, and others of the "nine worthies" holding high revel in "Cockloft Hall" on the outskirts of Newark; and of Drake, the handsomest young man in town, like Keats studying medicine and poetry, and like Keats dying of consumption. We think of how the young men of the city were less interested in the news of Jena and Trafalgar than that Moore and Jeffrey had been arrested for fighting a duel, that Mr. Campbell had improved the leisure given him by a government pension by writing "Gertrude of Wyoming," and that "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was the work of a Scotch border sheriff.

When the first *Evening Post* was laid on six hundred doorsteps and counters, New York was almost ready to assert her temporary primacy in literature. Irving was studying law downtown in the office of Brockholst Livingston; Paulding, four and a half years older, was living with his sister, Mrs. William Irving; Cooper was at school with an Englishman in Albany; Halleck was a child of eleven playing about the Guilford Green. Bryant at Cummington had not yet begun his juvenile scribblings, but would soon do so. Charles Brockden Brown had just returned to the city from a summer excursion, and was watching the sale of the second part of "Arthur Mervyn." Coleman sometimes met him at the homes of John Wells and Anthony Bleecker. The few Americans who paid any attention to letters had till now kept their gaze chiefly upon New England and Philadelphia. Dwight, the president of Yale, had just finished revising Watts's Psalms, Joel Barlow, after shining abroad as a diplomat and making a fortune in speculation, was living in state in Paris, and Trumbull, another of the Hartford Wits, had just become a Connecticut judge. Nothing better than the unreadable "Columbiad" of Barlow and Dwight's "Travels" was now to be expected from this trio. But in New York by 1805, though there was as yet little pure literature, there was an intellectual and semi-literary atmosphere. In addition to the young Knickerbockers, mention should be made of Tom Paine, dividing his last days, in debt, dirt, and dissipation, between New York and New Rochelle; and Philip Freneau, who frequently came over from his New Jersey seat.

Washington Irving made his first appearance in the *Morning Chronicle,* his brother's journal, where at nineteen he published his "Jonathan Oldstyle" papers. Nearly five years later he, his brother William, and his brother-in-law, Paulding, collaborated upon the "Salmagundi Papers," issued in leaflet form "upon hot-pressed vellum paper, as that is held in highest estimation for buckling up young ladies' hair." The twenty numbers, full of whimsy, mock seriousness, and light satire, de-

lighted Coleman not as literature but as journalism. He saw that his long editorials attacking Jefferson's measures for coast defense were flimsy weapons compared with the humorous "Plans for Defending Our Harbor," which he copied in full, saying that it "hits off admirably some of the late philosophical, economical plans which our philosophical, economical administration seems to be intent on our adopting." The *Evening Post* termed the whole series "the pleasant observations of one who is a legitimate descendant of Rabelais, and a true member of the Butler, Swift, and Sterne family." Irving perhaps recalled this praise when the time came to announce his next work.

The clever expedient by which announcement and advertisement were joined is familiar to all readers of the "Knickerbocker History of New York." Irving handed to Coleman for publication in the *Evening Post* of Oct. 26, 1809, the following notice:

Distressing

Left his lodgings some time since, and has not since been heard of, a small elderly gentleman, dressed in an old black coat and cocked hat, by the name of *Knickerbocker*. As there are some reasons for believing he is not entirely in his right mind, and as great anxiety is entertained about him, any information concerning him, left either at the Columbian Hotel, Mulberry Street, or at the office of this paper, will be thankfully received.

P. S. Printers of newspapers would be aiding the cause of humanity in giving an insertion to the above.

Such notices were then not infrequent. An authentic account has been preserved of how, some years later, the *Evening Post* saved the life of a Vermonter named Stephen Bourne by publishing an appeal for information regarding the whereabouts of an eccentric fellow named Colvin, who had disappeared and of whose murder Bourne had just been convicted upon circumstantial evidence. This appeal was read aloud in one of the New York hotels. It occurred to one of the guests that his brother-in-law in New Jersey had a hired man whose de-

scription answered to that given of Colvin; identification followed; and Bourne was released to fire a cannon at a general celebration of his deliverance. The news of Knickerbocker's disappearance caused much concern, and a city officer took under advisement the propriety of offering a reward.

Within a fortnight a letter was published in the *Evening Post* which described the appearance of Knickerbocker trudging wearedly north from Kingsbridge. Two days later appeared in the *Post* an announcement by Seth Handaside, proprietor of the Columbian Hotel, that "a very curious kind of a written book" had been found in the room of Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker, and that if he did not return to pay his bill, it would be disposed of to satisfy the charges. A preliminary advertisement of the two volumes of the Knickerbocker "History" was printed in the *Evening Post* of Nov. 28, by Innskeep and Bradford, with the price—$3.

Because the *Evening Post* circulated among the most intelligent people of the city, and because it had never forgotten that one object stated in its prospectus was "to cultivate a taste for sound literature," it was chosen by Drake and Halleck as the medium for the most famous series of satirical poems, the "Biglow Papers" excepted, in American literature.

Year in and year out, the *Evening Post* kept a space at the head of its news columns open for the best verse it could obtain. Just a month after it was established it plumed itself upon the publication of an original poem by the coarse but lively English satirist, "Peter Pindar" (Dr. John Wolcot), with whom Coleman corresponded. Wolcot is best remembered for verses ridiculing George III, and for his witticism that though George was a good subject for him, he was a poor subject to George. His contribution for Coleman, however, was not satiric, but a jejune three-stanza "Ode to the Lark." In 1803 the editor obtained a poem from the banker-poet Samuel Rogers, then regarded as a luminary of the first magnitude. A year later he had the distinction of receiving

from the august hand of Thomas Moore himself, who was on a tour through America, a manuscript poem, which was published in the *Evening Post* of July 9 without a title, and may be found in Moore's works under the heading, "Lines Written on Leaving Philadelphia." Unfortunately, Coleman had to accompany the publication with an apology; for though Moore had requested that the verses, which express his gratitude for his reception in Philadelphia, be withheld until Joseph Dennie could print them in his *Portfolio* there, Coleman had indiscreetly lent a copy to friends, and they had become such public property that there was no reason for keeping them longer out of the *Post*.

Much verse was also clipped from English periodicals and new English books, and it is creditable to Coleman's taste that Wolfe's "Burial of Sir John Moore" and Byron's stanzas on Waterloo were reprinted immediately after their first publication. He received vast quantities of indifferent American verse, signed with assumed names —"Mercutio," "Sedley," "Puck," and "Paridel"—together with some respectable nature poetry by "Matthew Bramble." In 1820-21 there were contributions from John Pierpont, the author of "Airs of Palestine," and Samuel Woodworth and George P. Morris, two minor Knickerbockers whose names are kept alive by "The Old Oaken Bucket" and "Woodman, Spare That Tree." We may be sure that keen young men like Halleck and Drake kept their eyes upon this poetical corner of the *Evening Post,* and indeed, Halleck apeared in it as early as the fall of 1818. He had come to town seven years previous, had taken a place in the counting room of Jacob Barker, a leading banker and merchant, had become intimate with Drake and attended his wedding, and had written many and published one or two songs. He frequently revisited his boyhood home at Guilford, Conn., and during a passage up the Sound one fine autumn evening he mentally composed the stanzas entitled "Twilight." Immediately upon his return to New York he sent the verses anonymously to the *Evening Post;* and

though Coleman was exceedingly fastidious in his literary tastes, he gave the lines to the printer after a single reading. This was one of the first two poems which Halleck placed in his collected writings.

On a crisp March evening the next year readers who opened the *Evening Post* at their tea-table saw in a prominent position among the few news items the following acknowledgement:

> Lines addressed to "Ennui" by "Croaker" are received, and shall have a place tomorrow. They are the production of genius and taste. A personal acquaintance with the author would be gratifying to the editor.

The next day, March 10, the position of honor was given up to the poem. "We have received two more poetic crackers of merit from our unknown correspondent, 'Croaker,'" wrote Coleman, "which shall appear, all in good time. But we must husband them. His promise to furnish us with a few more similar trifles, though he tells us we must expect an occasional touch at ourselves or party, is received with a welcome and a smile." And on March 11, Croaker's lines, "On Presenting the Freedom of the City to a Great General"—Jackson had just received that honor—were accompanied with another appeal:

> Is it not possible that we can have a personal and confidential interview with our friend "Croaker," at some time and place he will name? If he declines, will he inform me how he may be addressed by letter? In the meantime, whatever may happen (he, at least, will, before long, understand me), I expect from him discretion.

Succeeding issues showed that the connection between Croaker and the *Evening Post* had become fixed and that the city was in for whole series of skits on men, manners, and events. On March 12 was printed the poem called "The Secret Mine Sprung at a Late Supper," dealing with a recent political episode; next day it was followed by verses, "To Mr. Potter, the Ventriloquist," then a

popular performer; on the 15th there appeared "To Mr. Simpson," addressed to the manager of the city's chief theater; and on the 16th two poems were printed at once.

Most of the Knickerbocker art was imitative, and the Croaker poems were in a vein which had been much exploited in England. "Peter Pindar," George Colman the younger, whose humorous poems entitled "Broad Grins" had run through edition after edition, Tom Moore, and those kings of parody, Horatio and James Smith, were the models whom Croaker and Co. consciously or unconsciously followed. The moment was a happy one for such bold and witty thrusts. Had they appeared when party feeling was running high before or during the war, they would have given mortal offense; but the tolerance accompanying the political era of good feeling robbed them of any sting. From Coleman's efforts to arrange an interview with the authors, we may surmise that he feared some other editor would share the prize, and that he had suggestions for further squibs. His literary discernment was never better evinced than by his enthusiastic reception of the first Croaker contribution. A dull editor would have passed over the lines to ennui—which were only a facile expression of weariness with the new books by Lady Morgan and Mordecai M. Noah, the Edinburgh *Review,* Gen. Jackson's reception, Clinton's political prospects, and the Erie Canal plans—without perceiving their unusual qualities; a careless editor would have printed them without asking for more. Coleman saw the possibility of indefinitely extending the satires.

The origin of the poems had been purely casual. Halleck and Drake, the former now a prosperous and trusted aid of old Jacob Barker's, the latter a full-fledged physician recently returned from Europe, happened in their romantic attachment to spend a leisurely Sunday morning with a mutual acquaintance. As a diversion, Drake wrote several stanzas upon ennui, and Halleck capped them. They decided to send them to Coleman, and, if he would not publish them, to Mordecai N. Noah,

WILLIAM COLEMAN
Editor-in-Chief 1801-1829.

the Jewish journalist who had recently become editor of the Democratic *National Advocate*. Drake, returning to his home, also sent Coleman the two additional "crackers" which he acknowledged. The name "Croaker" then carried as distinct a meaning as would Dick Deadeye or Sherlock Holmes to-day, being that of the confirmed old grumbler in Goldsmith's "Good-Natured Man." Coleman's request for a meeting was granted by the poets, who, as Halleck told his biographer, James Grant Wilson, one evening knocked at the editor's door on Hudson Street:

> They were ushered into the parlor, the editor soon entered, the young poets expressed a desire for a few minutes' strictly private conversation with him, and the door being closed and locked, Dr. Drake said—"I am Croaker, and this gentleman, sir, is Croaker, Jr." Coleman stared at the young men with indescribable and unaffected astonishment,—at length exclaiming: "My God, I had no idea that we had such talents in America!" Halleck, with his characteristic modesty, was disposed to give Drake all the credit; but as it chanced that Coleman alluded in particularly glowing terms to one of the Croakers that was wholly his, he was forced to be silent, and the delighted editor continued in a strain of compliment and eulogy that put them both to the blush. Before taking their leave, the poets bound Coleman over to the most profound secrecy, and arranged a plan of sending him the MS., and of receiving the proofs, in a manner that would avoid the least possibility of the secret of their connection with the *Evening Post* being discovered. The poems were copied from the originals by Langstaff [an apothecary friend], that their handwriting should not divulge the secret, and were either sent through the mails, or taken to the *Evening Post* office by Benjamin R. Winthrop.

The poems now followed in quick succession. On March 17 there was a sly skit upon the surgeon-general, Samuel Mitchill, the best-known—and most self-important—physician and scientist in the city, and a man noted in the history of Columbia College; the next day an address to John Minshull, a prominent merchant; on March 19 a poem of general theme, "The Man Who Frets"; on

March 20 and 25, verses upon Manager Simpson of the Park Theater again; and on March 23 lines "To John Lang, Esq.," the sturdy old editor of the *Gazette*. An apostrophe "To Domestic Peace" and "A Lament for Great Ones Departed" also appeared in March, as did two complimentary epistles in verse to the authors, selected by Coleman from "the multitude of imitators that the popularity of Croaker has produced." One writer spoke of Croaker and Co. as "the wits of the day and the pride of the age," while the other credited them with making "all Gotham at thy dashes stare." There was a pause early in April while Drake was out of town, and Coleman confessed that "on account of the public, we begin to be a little impatient." But the series recommenced on April 8, and by May 1, when a poem to William Cobbett, the eminent English journalist, then sojourning on Long Island, appeared, twenty-one had been printed. One Croaker contribution had meanwhile come out in Noah's *National Advocate*. After another pause, on May 29 the *Evening Post* published the gem of the whole collection, Drake's "The American Flag," with the final quatrain written by Halleck. Coleman prefaced this famous patriotic lyric with the remark that it was one of those poems which, as Sir Philip Sidney said of the old ballad of Chevy Chase, stir the heart like a trumpet. It might more truly be said that, with its blare of sound and pomp of imagery, it stirs the hearer like a full brass band. Probably not even Coleman realized how many generations of schoolboys would declaim:

> When freedom from her mountain height,
> Unfurled her standard to the air,
> She tore the azure robe of night,
> And set the stars of glory there!

The success of the "Salmagundi Papers" did not compare in immediacy or extent with that of the Croaker poems. Copies of the *Evening Post*, which now had 2,000 subscribers, passed from hand to hand. In homes, bookstores, coffee-houses, taverns, and on the street corners

every one, as Halleck wrote his sister on April 1, was soon discussing the skits. "We have had the pleasure of seeing and of hearing ourselves praised, puffed, eulogized, execrated, and threatened as much as any writers since the days of Junius," he informed her. "The whole town has talked of nothing else for three weeks past, and every newspaper has done us the honor to mention us in some way, either of praise or censure, but all united in owning our talents and genius." The two young men, unused to seeing themselves in print, were tremendously elated. Once upon receiving a proof of some stanzas from the *Evening Post,* Drake laid his cheek down upon the lines and, with beaming eyes, exclaimed to his fellow-poet: "O, Halleck, isn't this happiness!" Most of the Croaker series, which was virtually concluded in June, though two poems now generally bracketed with them appeared in 1821, were too much the product of joint labor to be assigned to one writer or the other; the theme suggested itself, and both would elaborate it.

The newspapers received dozens of replies or imitations, Coleman once showing Halleck a sheaf of fifteen that had come in during a single morning. In spite of their local subjects, many of the poems were reprinted all over the North, and as far south as Washington. Woodworth, who himself wrote not a little on New York affairs, successfully begged a contribution from Halleck for his magazine. It may be mentioned that Coleman took some liberties with the series. To one he prefixed a humorous letter, in another he inserted a couplet, and in a third he altered the overworked name Chloe to Julia.

To modern readers the allusions to persons and events have lost their wit, and the historical interest they have gained is only partial compensation. We find little humor in the contretemps which occurred when Gen. Jackson, entertained by the city leaders, and already a Presidential possibility, threw the dinner into confusion by toasting De Witt Clinton, who as a former Federalist was heartily hated by many New York Democrats. Hence those

numbers seem the freshest which are most general in theme. The "Ode to Fortune" is better than the lines "To Simon," who was caterer at fashionable balls and weddings. "The Man Who Frets" is more interesting than "To Capt. Seaman Weeks," who was leading an independent political movement against Tammany. Only here and there are jests that we still appreciate, as the advice to the theatrical manager to discharge his comedians and hire the side-splitting legislators at Albany, and satire still comprehensible, as the verses upon Trumbull's florid Revolutionary paintings, which now hang in the national Capitol:

> Go on, great painter! dare be dull—
> No longer after Nature dangle;
> Call rectilinear beautiful;
> Find grace and freedom in an angle;
> Pour on the red, the green, the yellow,
> "Paint till a horse may mire upon it,"
> And while I've strength to write or bellow,
> I'll sound your praises in a sonnet.

But the skits are almost a catalogue of the worthies of the town. The prominent merchants were represented by such names as Henry Cruger, Nathaniel Prime, John K. Beekman, and John Jacob Astor. The politicians—Henry Meigs, who voted for admitting Missouri, Clinton, Morgan Lewis, Rufus King, and others—had more attention than any other group. Croaker had much fun at the expense of the chief hotel-keepers: Abraham Martling, owner of the Tammany Hall Hotel, and a political figure of importance, William Niblo, whose restaurant at William and Pine Streets was popular, and Cato Alexander, to whose tavern on the postroad four miles out all the young bucks made summer excursions. The stage folk received generous space, among them James W. Wallack and Miss Catherine Lesugg, later Mrs. James Hackett, whose family names were to figure so prominently in American theatrical history. Fifty years later James Hackett himself contributed to the *Evening Post* an

interesting chapter of reminiscences of Halleck, recalling how they had first become friends when they were both admirers of the blooming Miss Lesugg, then fresh from England, and how they maintained the friendship till Halleck's death. Even the editors—Coleman, Lang, Woodworth, "whose *Chronicle* died broken-hearted," and Spooner of Brooklyn—were not spared by Croaker.

Newspapers, however, usually establish a literary reputation not by original poetry, but by literary criticism, and we may well stop to examine the *Evening Post's* record in this field. It was slightly handicapped by the fact that between 1801 and the appearance of "The Spy" in 1821 there was virtually nothing worth criticizing. Charles Brockden Brown had finished his career as a novelist before the *Evening Post* was fairly launched. Irving was silent after his publication of the Knickerbocker "History" until the first part of "The Sketch-Book" appeared in 1819. In verse almost nothing but that marvelous piece of boyish inspiration, "Thanatopsis," is now remembreed. Patriotic Americans of the day, like Coleman, made a painful effort to believe that Allston's "Sylphs of the Seasons," Paine's "Juvenile Poems," Mrs. Sigourney's "Moral Pieces," and Pierpont's "Airs of Palestine" were very nearly as good as the literature coming from the pens of Byron, Coleridge, Scott, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley; but the pretense was a ghastly mockery.

Most of the early book notices in the *Evening Post* were of two useful kinds: they were either an examination of political pamphlets for party ends, or a gutting of new books of travel, biography, and history for their news value. From the very commencement of the journal, many columns of matter were furnished by the various pamphlets called forth by Vice-President Burr's attempted suppression of John Wood's "History of the Administration of John Adams"; for this internecine warfare among Democrats delighted all Federalists. In the first days of 1803 pamphlets upon the annexation of Louisiana began to demand selection and comment. Then came pamphlets

upon the embargo, non-intercourse, impressment, and the conduct of the British minister, Jackson. The original publication of the very effective pamphlet by a "New England Farmer" upon "Mr. Madison's War" was in installments in the *Evening Post* during the summer of 1812. Gouverneur Morris inspired the newspaper's careful attention to the Erie Canal question; one evidence of its interest in the subject was a series of articles in the spring of 1807, reviewing the writings of "Agricola" upon it.

The books which were gutted were sometimes exceedingly interesting. Thus in 1816 Coleman published copious extracts from James Simpson's "Visit to Flanders," a vivid account of Waterloo and other battlefields as they appeared the month after Napoleon's defeat. In 1817 much was made of Cadwallader Colden's "Life of Fulton," and two years later of M. M. Noah's entertaining "Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States." The extracts from O'Meara's memoirs of Napoleon, printed in 1822, led Coleman into an attack upon Napoleon's jailer at St. Helena, Sir Hudson Lowe; and when Col. Wm. L. Stone of the *Commercial Advertiser* came to Lowe's defense, an animated controversy followed.

It was part of Coleman's editorial creed to beat the big drum for American letters. Most of the Knickerbocker writers were themselves really provincial in literary matters, keeping always a nervous and envious eye upon England; for it was the period when, as Lowell puts it, we thought Englishmen's thought, and with English salt on her tail our wild eagle was caught. This provincialism frequently expressed itself in an insistence that America was, not America, but a bigger England, and that the Hudson was not the Hudson, but a nobler Thames. Coleman thought it his duty to encourage native literature, and the amount of fifth-rate verse that was given patriotic praise in the *Evening Post* is dismaying.

The ode of Robert Treat Paine, jr., "Rule New England," was commended with a warmth that owed some-

thing to Coleman's intimacy with the elder Paine. Personal considerations also had their share in the flattering notice of Winthrop Sargent's "Boston" the next year. Coleman was one of the few who has ever closed Peter Quince's "Parnassian Shop" "with impressions favorable to the young author." In 1805 he was struck by the "Democracy Unveiled" of Thomas Green Fessenden, a poetaster who had got some notice by writing a successful book while imprisoned for debt in Fleet Street, London. Francis Arden received favorable mention for a translation of Ovid, while another very minor bard, Richard B. Davis, who before his premature death had been a friend of Irving and Paulding, was generously praised in 1807. The *Post* published a review of Pierpont's "Airs of Palestine" by Henry Brevoort, Irving's bosom friend, and pronounced it indispensable to any American library. It thought Halleck's amusing satire on a New York merchant family in society, "Fanny," a better poem than Byron's "Beppo," whose verse it imitated. Byron's popularity at this time was such that when his "Mazeppa" was published in England, a copy was hurried to Philadelphia by the fast ship *Helen,* was placed in the printer's hands at 2 p. m., and twenty-two hours later the volumes were issuing from the press complete and being rushed to the bookstores.

But there were a few books that live. After Brockden Brown's death in 1810, we find repeated mention of him, "amiable and beloved by all his acquaintances," by Coleman. "Wieland" the editor thought worthy of his powers; and he remarked of "Ormond" that the reason why it was formal and uninteresting was, as he personally knew, that it was "written by stinted tasks of so many pages a day, and sent to the printer without correction or revision, or even reading over, till it came back to him in proof." One of Coleman's last contributions to the *Evening Post* was a short notice of a new set of Brown. He singled out for remark the fact that the novelist seldom troubled to give minute descriptions of sensible objects. "These he generally dispatches with a few brief and bold

touches, and bends his whole strength to the speculative parts of the work, to follow out trains of reflection and the analysis of feelings." In 1806 the *Evening Post* carried a half dozen articles upon Noah Webster's new octavo dictionary of the English language, condemning it as to definitions, orthography, and orthoepy, and quarreling violently with some of Webster's grammatical and etymological opinions. The reviewer accused Webster of grossly misrepresenting the views of the English lexicographer Walker. Webster replied in two long and forcible articles, compelling the reviewer to admit some mistakes.

Irving's career was closely followed by the *Post*. It defended his Knickerbocker "History" against the embattled Dutch families, led by Gulian C. Verplanck, who charged that he had defamed them. When the first part of "The Sketch Book" appeared, a prompt review was contributed by "a literary friend," probably Brevoort or Paulding. Warmly eulogistic, it is still discriminating. It commended Irving for his "grace of style; the rich, warm tone of benevolent feeling; the freely-flowing vein of hearty and happy humor, and the fine-eyed spirit of observation, sustained by an enlightened understanding, and regulated by a perception or fitness—a tact—wonderfully quick and sure." It declared "Rip Van Winkle" the masterpiece of the collection. "For that comic spirit which is without any infusion of gall, which delights in what is ludicrous rather than what is ridiculous (for its laughter is not mixed with contempt), which seeks its gratification in the eccentricities of a simple, unrefined state of society, rather than in the vicious follies of artificial life; for the vividness and truth, with which Rip's character is drawn, and the state of society in the village where he lived, is depicted; and for the graceful ease with which it is told, the story of Rip Van Winkle has few competitors." Unfortunately, Coleman added a footnote in which he stated his personal opinion that "Rip Van Winkle" lacked probability, and that the poetical tale of "The Wife" was superior.

Six weeks later the second part of "The Sketch Book"

was reviewed with equal taste by apparently the same hand—that of some one who knew how hard Irving was hit by the death of his fiancée, and his circumstances abroad. At the beginning of 1823 Coleman himself wrote two long articles in praise of the new "Bracebridge Hall," declaring that he had undertaken the task of rescuing it "from the rude and ill-natured treatment of some of our American critics"; the *Literary Repository* and two newspapers of Philadelphia and Baltimore having assailed it. One reason for its ill-natured reception, he thought, was the high charge made for the American edition, and another the kindly view it took of British life and manners. He showed no little acquaintance with Irving's personal affairs, and probably had seen some of his letters home. One epistle, written late in 1819, and telling of the essayist's acquaintanceships in London, had been copied out by Mrs. Hoffman, mother of Irving's dead sweetheart, for the *Evening Post*.

Those were the days in which Sydney Smith's taunt, "Who reads an American book?" struck home. In 1820 Coleman recorded with pride that the rage for new publications was so great that "not a day passes but the press is delivered of two or more"; though he referred to magazines as well as books. On Sept. 4, 1823, he boasted that such value was becoming attached to American literature in Great Britain that its republication was profitable. A Scotch publisher had begun issuing selections from Irving, Brooks, Percival, and others in a miscellany circulated from Edinburgh. "Our sun has certainly arisen, and one day, we predict, it will beam as bright as it does, or ever did, in the Old World; and the Americans who may arise in future ages will not have to blush on hearing their classics named with the greatest of antiquity."

More space was consistently given by the *Evening Post* to reviews of plays than to book notices. In fact, the keen interest of New Yorkers in the theater had produced very competent dramatic criticism before the newspaper was founded. William Dunlap, the famous manager-

playwright of the time, tells us that in 1796 there was organized in the city a little group of critics, including Dr. Peter Irving, Charles Adams, son of John Adams, Samuel Jones, William Cutting, and John Wells, the law-partner of Coleman. They would take turns writing a criticism of the evening's play, and meet next day to discuss and revise it before handing it to one of the newspapers. Their meetings had ended before 1801, but after the *Evening Post* began publication several of the group, and especially Wells, wrote much for the new journal.

The theater was the more prominent in Old New York because the variety of public entertainments in and just after 1803 was small. Those with a literary turn of mind might drop in at the Shakespeare Gallery on Park Street, which afforded a "belles lettres lounge"—that is, a table laden with newspapers and magazines of the day, and soft seats in a well-lighted room, for $1.50 a year. Those with scientific tastes could go to the Museum on Broadway, with its curiosities ranging from mastodon bones to a representation of Gen. Butler being tomahawked by the Osages, and another of Mrs. Rawlings and her six infants at a birth. There was a thin stream of entertainers—magicians, who were approved because their illusions taught the young to beware of wily rogues; ventriloquists, balloonists, rare at first and objects of supreme interest, exhibitors of lions and tapirs, and novelties like the Eskimo whom a sea captain brought to town and who gave aquatic exhibitions on the Hudson. In summer the public had several open-air amusement places. One named Vauxhall was situated near the top of the Bowery, offering music, fireworks, and refreshments. Another was the Columbian Gardens, and the most ambitious was the Mt. Vernon Gardens. In winter, one of the chief fashionable events was the annual concert of the Philharmonic Society, held impressively at Tontine Hall on Broadway, and consisting half of instrumental music, half of vocal solos from now forgotten operas like the "Siege of Belgrade." About New Year's began the select

dances of the City Assembly, in the assembly rooms in William Street. Here young ladies made their début, the finest gowns were exhibited, and the bucks showed a skill acquired at the dancing school of M. Lalliet.

This list of amusements comes near being exhaustive, and the Park Theater was always the center of attraction. The building, fronting on Park Row, had been completed in 1798 at a cost placed by the *Evening Post* —no doubt an overestimate—at $130,500. The charge was $1 for box seats, of which there were at first three full circle tiers, and after 1807 four; 75 cents to the pit, and 50 cents to the gallery. Early in the century performances began at 6:30, and at 9:30; the first play was usually followed by a farcical after-piece. Washington Irving as a lad used to pretend to go to bed after prayers, descend to the ground by way of the roof of a woodshed, and slip away to see this final performance. The *Evening Post* gives us a good deal of information about the management of the theater, which was under Dunlap until 1808, and then under Cooper and Price. In its first issue Dunlap appealed to his patrons against the dangerous practice of "smoaking," saying that the use of cigars was a constant topic for ridicule by European travelers. From Coleman's later comments we learn that no woman would for a moment have thought of sitting anywhere but in the boxes, and that no gentleman would have shared the gallery with the rough crowd that filled it. Even the pit, with its dirty, broken floor, its backless benches, and its incursions of rats from crannies under the stage, would now be considered hardly tolerable. About the entrance there always clustered a set of idle boys and disorderly adults who, when spectators left during an intermission or before the after-piece, set up a clamor for the return checks. Efforts to stop the gift or sale of these checks were in general futile. The interior was renovated in 1807, enlargements were made to give a total of 2,372 seats, patent lamps were installed, and a room above the lobby was fitted up as a bar and

restaurant. Still further improvements were made in 1809.

The independent and severe criticisms of the acting which appeared in the *Evening Post,* and to a lesser extent in Irving's *Morning Chronicle,* were not at first relished by theatrical folk. The names of the actors and actresses, Cooper, Fennell, Hallam, Turnbull, Mrs. Johnson, and so on are now all but forgotten. In Boston in 1802 dramatic criticism was written largely by performers themselves, who sat up till an early hour to insure proper newspaper notices, and in Charleston the same practice had been known. In all cities most actors held that no one was really competent to serve as a critic unless he was familiar with the performances at the two great London theaters. So irritated did the dramatic guild become that in January, 1802, there was produced at the theater a satire upon the *Evening Post* reviews, written by Fennell and called "The Wheel of Truth." It was designed to show one Littlewit, a newspaper critic, in a ludicrous and foolish light. He was represented as finding fault with Stuart's portrait of Washington because by the footrule the head was a half-inch too long, and with a certain book because for the same price he could buy one twice as heavy. Coleman answered this attack in five columns published in two issues, which was five columns more than it deserved. He, Wells, and Anthony Bleecker continued reviewing, and a contemporary writer records that he "aimed to settle all criticism by his individual verdict."

Upon most of the plays there was little to say, for they were long familiar to readers and theater-goers. Shakespeare was given year in and year out, a full dozen of his dramas. Others of the Elizabethans, including Ben Jonson, Marlowe ("The Jew of Malta"), Massinger, Middleton, and Beaumont and Fletcher, were occasionally seen. Otway's "Venice Preserved" was something of a favorite. The comedies of Sheridan, Goldsmith, and Fielding had regular representations. George Colman's plays, especially "John Bull," were highly popular, John Home's "Douglas" was always sure of a house,

and for the first two decades of the century Kotzebue was much played and admired; while many of Scott's novels and poems were dramatized. The *Evening Post* said of the first performance of "Marmion," in 1812, that it "presents a chef-d'œuvre of melodramatic excellence." In William Dunlap at first, and later in M. M. Noah, New York had its own rather crude dramatists. When the latter's patriotic play, "She Would be a Soldier; or, The Plains of Chippewa," was presented in 1819, Coleman spoke of it coldly, suggesting that the plot had been inspired by the French tale of "Lindor et Clara, ou la Fille Soldat," and admitting only that "it is not deficient in interest." But he applauded Noah's "Siege of Tripoli" next year as deserving what it met, "a greater degree of success than we ever recollect to have attended an original piece on our stage." Its vivacity, its martial ardor, its declamation, he thought calculated to arouse a high and manly patriotism. Nearly the whole of the criticisms, however, had to be given up not to plays, but to performers and interpretations of parts.

It was only toward the end of Coleman's long editorship that the first brilliant chapter in the history of the New York stage began. The actor of greatest note before the War of 1812 was George Frederick Cooke, who was warmly applauded by the *Evening Post* in a run which began at the Park Theater in November, 1810, and who lies buried in St. Paul's churchyard. It is interesting to note that during the war English stage-folk, for most of the actors and actresses of the day were English, continued to play before admiring audiences. An engagement which the manager had made with Philip Kemble was suspended; but the *Evening Post* announced in August, 1812, when fighting was general, that the well-known London actor Holman and his daughter had just sailed, and they had a successful New York engagement that autumn. The *Evening Post* in 1819 greatly admired the English singer and actor Phillipps, and Coleman's praise helped to bring him $9,900 gross in six benefit nights. It had a warm word for Catherine Lesugg and

for James W. Wallack, when they made their New York début in September, 1818. But the first great dramatic event at the Park Theater was the initial American appearance, on Nov. 29, 1820, of Edmund Kean in "Richard III."

Kean was in his early thirties, and for a half dozen years, since his first triumphant season at Drury Lane in 1814, New York had been hearing of his magnificent powers. Coleman went to the theater that autumn night suspicious that most of his reputation had been acquired by stage trickery and appeals to the groundlings. He saw a man below the middle stature, and heard a voice thin and grating in its upper tones. "But," admitted the editor, "he had not finished his soliloquy before our prejudices gave way, and we saw the most complete actor, in our judgment, that ever appeared on our boards." The eyes were wonderfully expressive and commanding, and in its lower register the voice, said Coleman, "strikes with electric force upon the nerves, and at times chills the very blood." He declared, in an enthusiasm which recalls Coleridge's remark that seeing Kean play was like reading Shakespeare by lightning flashes:

> We had been induced to suppose that it was only in the more important scenes that we should see Kean's superiority, and that the lighter passages would, in theatrical phrase, be *walked over*. Far otherwise; he gave to what has heretofore seemed the most trivial, an interest and effect never by us imagined. The most striking point he made in the whole play (for we cannot notice the many minor beauties he exhibited) was his manner of waking and starting from his couch, with the cry of "Give me a horse—bind up my wounds! Have mercy, heaven! Ha, soft, 'twas but a dream." . . . This, with all that followed, was so admirable; bespeaking a soul, so harrowed up by remorse, so loaded with his guilt, as gave such an awful and impressive lesson to youth, that no one who witnessed it can ever forget it.

When Kean played in "The Merchant of Venice," according to the *Evening Post*, the audience hung so breathless upon him that "when it was almost impossible to

restrain loud bursts of delight, a kind of general 'hush!' was whispered from every part." Many thought that his best rôle was Sir Giles Overreach, and an anonymous critic in the *Evening Post* said so. Coleman wrote that the effect he produced as King Lear was indescribable:

> Strong emotions even to tears were excited in all parts of the house; nor were they confined to the female part of the audience. It could not be otherwise. Who could remain callous to the appearance of a feeble old monarch, upwards of fourscore years, staggering under decrepitude and overwhelmed with misfortunes, attended with aberration of mind which ends in downright madness? Such a representation was given with perfect fidelity by Mr. Kean. His plaintive tones were heard from the bottom of a broken heart, and completed the picture of human woe. Nature, writhing under the poignancy of her feeling, and finding no utterance in words or tears, found a vent at length for her indescribable sensations in a spontaneous, idiotic laugh. The impression made upon all who were present, will never be forgotten. His dreadful imprecations upon his daughters, his solemn appeals to heaven, struck the soul with awe.

On the final night, Dec. 28, according to the report in the *Evening Post,* the theater rang with unprecedented plaudits, and at the close the audience rose by common impulse and cheered Kean three times three.

But when Kean returned to New York in 1825 he was greeted with a storm of mixed applause and anger—his first night was the night of the famous "Kean Riot." In 1821 he had accepted a summer engagement in Boston, and on the third night, finding the theater almost empty because of the heat, refused to go on with the play, thereby giving great offense. Moreover, after his return to England, reports of his flagrant immorality reached America. When the *Commercial Advertiser* heard of his second tour, it denounced him as a shameless "scoundrel" and "libertine." Coleman, however, was eager to defend him. The Park Theater opened on Kean's first night, Nov. 14, at 5:30, and it was at once filled with a crowd of more than 2,000. Seven-eighths, according to the *Evening Post,* were eager to hear Kean, but about one hun-

dred, many of them Bostonians, made up an organized opposition. The moment the actor stepped forward, the groans, hisses, and shouts of "Off Kean!" mingled with the clapping and the cheers of his friends, were deafening. The play proceeded amid a continued uproar. Some few scenes in the fourth and fifth acts were heard, but the others, including all in which Kean appeared, were given in dumb show. The actor tried repeatedly to address the audience, but in vain. At one point he was struck in the chest by an orange. One interrupter was put out by the infuriated audience, and fights occurred in various parts of the pit, with damage to benches and furniture.

It would be pleasant to say that the *Evening Post* roundly denounced this disgraceful scene, but it rebuked it only mildly. Fortunately, the outrage was not repeated. Kean issued a mollifying address, the Bostonians went home, and a reaction ensued. As the *Evening Post* records, every one of his houses was filled to overflowing, and when he took his benefit night on Feb. 25, 1826, upon leaving, his receipts were $1,800 clear.

Compared with that of Kean, the début of Junius Brutus Booth, made in "Richard III" on the night of Oct. 5, 1821, attracted little attention. He came to the city a perfect stranger, and slowly made his way. When Edwin Forrest appeared at the New York Theater, in the Bowery, in the autumn of 1826, the *Evening Post* pronounced this American-born actor as good as any but the very foremost Englishmen—"irresistibly imposing," indeed. But the only engagement comparable with Kean's was that of Macready, who made his bow on Oct. 3, 1826, as Virginius in the well-known tragedy of that name by Knowles. He was greeted so enthusiastically that he was disconcerted, and many thought him no better than their old favorite, Cooper. But on the second night, when he impersonated Macbeth, his genius was perceived. Coleman wrote that he had never seen the rôle embodied so consistently. "There was a unity in his conception of character, which made the development

of Macbeth's feelings and prompting motives . . . perfectly intelligible, from his first interview with the weird sisters to the final overthrow of all his hopes, and his desperate conflict with Macduff."

The New York which Macready visited in 1826 was no longer a city of one playhouse, though when people spoke of "the theatre" they still always meant that on Park Row. The people could now support more than one star and one company at a time. Macready finished his October engagement on the 20th, and was immediately followed by Mr. and Mrs. James K. Hackett, in the first American performance of "The Comedy of Errors." At the Chatham Theater, Junius Brutus Booth was playing Shakespeare; on the 25th he gave "Othello," with James Wallack as Iago. Mrs. Gilbert at the New York Theater, a brand-new edifice in the Bowery, seating 3,000 spectators, was presenting "Much Ado About Nothing." She was succeeded the next month by Forrest in a repertory of plays. The *Evening Post* that spring had surprised many by stating that the profits of the Chatham Theater the previous season had been $23,000, and the gross receipts $75,000. Of the former sum "The Lady of the Lake" alone, a play with musical numbers interspersed, had yielded $10,000. The newspaper was delighted when the Hacketts received, on their three benefit nights in "The Comedy of Errors," a total of $3,500. This was actually $1,100 more than the balloonist, Eugene Robertson, took one afternoon that month when he floated from Castle Garden to Elizabeth, N. J., in the presence of a crowd estimated at more than 40,000.

The day when the *Evening Post* should have a musical editor was as far distant as that when it should give to sports more than a semi-annual paragraph or two upon the races. But Coleman enthusiastically reviewed the first Italian opera offered in the city—a performance of Rossini's "Barber of Seville" at the New York Theater on Nov. 29, 1825. The fashion of the town turned out to see this Italian troupe, headed by Señor Garcia, on every Tuesday and Saturday during the middle of the

winter; paying $2 for box seats and $1 for the pit. "In what language shall we speak of an entertainment so novel in this country?" asked the editor:

> All have obtained a general idea of the opera by report. But report can give but a faint idea of it. Until it is seen, it will never be believed that a play can be conducted in recitative or singing and yet appear nearly as natural as the ordinary drama. We were last night surprised, delighted, enchanted; and such were the feelings of all who witnessed the performance. The repeated plaudits with which the theater rang were unequivocal, unaffected bursts of rapture.

Would American taste approve of the opera? "We predict," Coleman ventured, "that it will never hereafter dispense with it."

CHAPTER FIVE

BRYANT BECOMES EDITOR OF THE "EVENING POST"

In 1829 Richard H. Dana, the poet and father of the author of "Two Years Before the Mast," remarked that "If Bryant must write in a paper to get his bread, I pray God he may get a bellyful." Bryant had entered the office of the *Evening Post* in the summer of 1826, half by accident and without any intention of making journalism his profession; yet he was to remain there fifty-two years, till the very day he received his death-stroke. No other great figure in American literature save Dr. Franklin has such a record as a publicist. How did it happen that the foremost poet in America, already known as such by "Thanatopsis" and "To a Waterfowl," became the "junior editor" of the *Evening Post* in Coleman's declining years?

The young poet-lawyer had come to New York city from Great Barrington, Mass., at the beginning of 1825, when he was but thirty years old, brought thither by Henry D. Sedgwick and Gulian C. Verplanck, two citizens of substance and influence who had been struck by the genius shown in his first volume of verse. The Sedgwicks were a well-known Berkshire family. Catharine M. Sedgwick, later modestly famous as a novelist, was the first to make Bryant's acquaintance, and had strongly commended the struggling barrister to her older brother Henry, who was a leader at the New York bar. With neither his profession nor with life in a small town was Bryant contented; and the applause which had been given to "Thanatopsis" in the *North American Review,* to "The Ages" when he read it before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard, and to his first thin volume in 1821, seemed to justify his hopes for a metropolitan literary career. "The time is peculiarly propitious," Henry Sedg-

wick urged him from New York; "the Athenæum, just instituted, is exciting a sort of literary rage, and it is proposed to set up a journal in connection with it." If his pen did not yield a full living, he could make an additional sum by giving lessons to foreigners in the English language and literature. Bryant willingly yielded. Leaving his wife and baby behind, he settled in a boarding house that spring, and became one of the two editors of the monthly *New York Review,* the first number of which appeared in June, 1825.

His arrival to reside in New York had attracted general notice. To all discerning lovers of literature in the city, and they were many, his best poems were well known. Verplanck had given his first volume a cordial review in the New York *American,* and when he had made a preliminary visit to the city in 1824 the *Evening Post* had reprinted "Thanatopsis" with a warm word of praise. At the homes of Sedgwick and Verplanck, the former a sort of Holland House for New York, Bryant was at once made acquainted with Fitzgreene Halleck and J. G. Percival, with the aspiring young poets Hillhouse and Robert Sands, with the artists S. B. F. Morse and Dunlap, with Chancellor Kent and President Duer of Columbia. We may be sure that Coleman, who was proud of his friendship with Brockden Brown and Irving, did not fail to seek out the young New Englander who had come from near his former home, and whose poem "Green River" celebrated a stream that Coleman knew well. On Nov. 16, 1825, the *Evening Post* republished from the *New York Review* Bryant's "The Death of the Flowers," on March 3, 1826, it took from a magazine his "To a Cloud," and on June 11 it reprinted "The Song of Pitcairn's Island"; while various flattering references were made to his work.

Yet Bryant's position was a precarious and anxious one. He wrote his friend Dana that, relieved as he was to get out of his "shabby" profession as a lawyer, in which he had been shocked by a bad miscarriage of justice and by the petty wrangles in which he was involved, he was

not sure that he had found a better. Reviewing books was not the most congenial of employments. His salary was at first $1,000 a year; but the *Review* drooped, and after an effort had been made to bolster it up by amalgamation with two other periodicals, Bryant found himself in the early summer of 1826 co-editor of the *United States Review and Literary Gazette,* with a quarter ownership and a salary of only $500. His confidence in his ability to live by his pen was so shaken that he obtained a permit to practice law in the city courts, and was actually associated with Henry Sedgwick in a case.

At this juncture, in the middle of June, William Coleman was thrown from his gig by a runaway horse. It was for a time doubted whether he would recover, and as he was confined to his room for ten weeks, it was necessary to find some one to assist his son on the *Evening Post.* A temporary position was offered Bryant, and Verplanck and others earnestly counselled him to take it. "The establishment is an extremely lucrative one," wrote Bryant. "It is owned by two individuals—Mr. Coleman and Mr. Burnham. The profits are estimated at about thirty thousand dollars a year—fifteen to each proprietor. This is better than poetry and magazines."

Throughout July Bryant was busy upon the *Evening Post;* on Aug. 2 he wrote an account of the Columbia Commencement for it, criticizing the young speakers for confusing "will" and "shall"; and on Aug. 12 he furnished it two brief poetic translations, from Clement Marot and Dante, neither of which is included in his collected works. Immediately thereafter he set out on a trip to Boston, to bear to Richard H. Dana also an offer from the *Evening Post* of a permanent place on its staff, which Dana, after some hesitation, refused. This trip was made possible by Coleman's renewed attention to the journal. The poet's absence gave the *Evening Post* an opportunity to speak highly of Bryant, whom it now considered a full staff-member. On Aug. 21-22 it republished his poem "The Two Graves" from the *United States Review,* writing of the accomplished author as one

to whom, "by the general assent of the enlightened portion of his countrymen

> 'The lyre and laurels both are given
> With all the trophies of triumphant day.' "

Another evidence of the high esteem in which the newspaper held Bryant appeared when on Sept. 5 it translated from the *Revue Encyclopedique* of Paris a flattering notice of "the exquisite and finished beauty of the little poems from the pen of W. C. Bryant." The French magazine credited "the poet of the Green River" with having destroyed "the too commonly received opinion that the moral and physical features of the New World are too cold and serene for the glorious visions of poetry." In October Coleman spoke of the editors of the *United States Review* as "men whose labors heretofore have contributed so much to the elevation of the American character in the republic of letters"; and he reprinted Bryant's "Mary Magdalene." The poet returned from Boston via Cummington, and brought his wife with him to live.

It was made clear to readers that fall that there was a new and vigorous hand in the management of the journal. Coleman's steady loss of health had been accompanied by a decline in the strength of his editorial utterances. Moreover, he was an editor of the old school that had passed away with the era of good feeling, and that was now out of place. He liked to fight over old battles —he debated the Hartford Convention with Theodore Dwight, and the Florida Purchase with the *National Advocate*. His newspaper was neither Whig nor Democrat, but might best be described as a Federalist sheet qualified by a mild attachment to Andrew Jackson. In the Presidential election of 1824 it had supported Crawford simply because Coleman hated John Quincy Adams as a traitor to Federalism. It was prosperous, for Michael Burnham, still an active man, saw to that. It had improved in many respects. In 1816 it had been enlarged to offer six columns to the page, instead of five, or twenty-

four in all, and the amount of miscellaneous matter had increased; a short time earlier it had begun printing two editions, one at two and the other at four p. m.; in May, 1819, it had used its first news illustration, a rough drawing of "the velocipede, or swift-walker"; and in January, 1817, it had begun to make a very rare use of the first page for news. But the journal tended too much to look backward, not forward.

Bryant's son-in-law and biographer, Parke Godwin, states that in the years 1826-29 we can trace his labors in the *Evening Post* in longer and better book reviews, more attention to art, clearer characterizations of public men, and frequent suggestions of reform in city affairs. This is in part misleading. The frequent suggestions for local improvements were an old feature of the journal, and did not become more numerous. Characterizations of public men were not often written nor were they important. More books were noticed, especially those of Bliss & White and the young firm of Harpers, because there were more books—the *Post* remarked that in the last three months of 1825 no less than 233 volumes had come from the American press, apart from periodicals, of which 137 were original American works; but mere notices were furnished, not reviews. More than once Bryant, who unmistakably penned these notices, apologizes for their brevity and sketchiness by saying that he had not had time to do more than glance through the book in hand. However, the frequency of these notices, and the inclusion of much literary gossip and book announcements, gave the newspaper an increased literary flavor.

There was, as Godwin says, more news of art, for Bryant was interested in painting, and supplied long critical descriptions of new canvases by Dunlap and Washington Allston, both his friends. There was an increased amount of news about Columbia College and those professors, Anthon, Da Ponte, and Henry J. Anderson, whom Bryant knew well. The English magazines and newspapers were read more diligently, and interesting

items from them grew in number. Bryant took in charge the filling of the upper left-hand corner of the news-page with poetry, and we see fresher and better verse there—verse by Thomas Hood, Bishop Heber, Hartley Coleridge, and other Englishmen who preceded Tennyson and Browning. The poet wrote some fresh little essays; as editor of the *United States Review,* for example, he had compiled a curious article from an old colonial file of the New York *Gazette,* and he made another on the same topic equally curious, for the *Evening Post.* A few of the essays were satirical—e.g., one of April 23, 1828, dealing with the fashion of indiscriminate puffery that had grown up in dramatic criticism.

Between 1826 and his departure upon a trip to Europe in June, 1834, Bryant—with one exception to be noted later—wrote no signed verse for the *Evening Post,* reserving his few productions, since he was too busy for much poetical composition, for the magazines and annuals. But several effusions from his pen can nevertheless be identified. In the first two months of 1829 the town was much interested by the courageous woman lecturer, one of the first of the long line which has struggled to enlarge woman's sphere, Miss Fanny Wright. Bryant, as his letters show, wrote the rather scornful ode to this free-thinking disciple of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, which appeared in the issue of Jan. 29:

Thou wonder of the age, from whom
Religion waits her final doom,
Her quiet death, her euthanasia,
Thou in whose eloquence and bloom
The age beholds a new Aspasia!

* * * * * *

O 'tis a glorious sight for us,
The gaping throng, to see thee thus
The light of dawning truth dispense,
While Col. Stone, the learn'd and brave,
The press's Atlas, mild but grave,
Hangs on the words that leave thy mouth,
Slaking his intellectual drouth,

In that rich stream of eloquence,
And notes thy teachings, to repeat
Their wisdom in his classic sheet . . .

Another bit of verse, a short political satire (March 25, 1831), is identifiable by the fact that it is signed "Q," the initial Bryant used for dramatic criticism, and that it is marked as his in the files presented by the *Evening Post* to the Lenox Collection. Called "The Bee in the Tar Barrel," it represents the buzzings of the *National Gazette*—Henry Clay's organ in New York—over the tariff, the removal of the Cherokees, and other current topics:

I heard a bee, on a summer day,
Brisk, and busy, and ripe for quarrel—
Bustling, and buzzing, and bouncing away,
In the fragrant depths of an old tar-barrel.

Do you ask what his buzzing was all about?
Oh, he was wondrous shrewd and critical.
'Twas sport to hear him scold and flout,
And the topics he chose were all political . . .

Bryant also is probably to be credited with several of the last New Year's addresses of the carriers, long rhymed reviews of the year's events which were then expected annually. He could have tossed off more easily than any one else in the office such hexameters as the following (Jan. 2, 1829):

Since New Year's day came last about,
The Emperor Nicholas sent out
A potent army, full of fight,
Cossack, and Pole, and Muscovite,
To give the Turks a castigation,
Such as they ne'er had since creation.
They passed the Pruth in fine condition,
And meeting no great opposition,
They thought to make their winter quarters
By Hellespont's resounding waters . . .

There are frequently unsigned poems of a serious char-

acter in the *Evening Post* during these years, but nine in ten are so poor that it is impossible to believe that Bryant wrote them. Now and then occurs one which might be his; such, for example, are the translations of lyrics from the German of Gleim which appeared on Nov. 13, 1827, and Dec. 2, 1828. Bryant did not claim all of his poems in even the *United States Review;* it has been assumed of these, and it may be assumed of any lost in the *Evening Post* files, that they were not worth claiming.

As a young man, Bryant took his journalistic duties light-heartedly, and one of his distinctive contributions lay in his literary hoaxes. He and his close friend Robert C. Sands, a talented young assistant of Col. Stone in editing the *Commercial Advertiser,* delighted in them. "Did you see a learned article in the *Evening Post* the other day about Pope Alexander VI and Cæsar Borgia?" he wrote Gulian Verplanck, then a Congressman in Washington. "Matt. Patterson undertook to be saucy in the *Commercial* as to a Latin quotation in it, so we—i.e., Sands and myself—sent him on a fool's errand." The editor of the *Commercial* had corrected the *Evening Post's* Latin, and Bryant had replied as follows, inventing the authority he cited:

> As to the Latin of the phrase, *"Vides, mi fili, quam parva sapientia gubernatur mundus,"* he affirms that it is not good. He says that it should be, *"Vides, mi fili, quantilla sapientia regitur mundus."* He adds, however, that it was not said by any of the Popes, but by some great statesman, whose name he does not give, probably because he does not know it. As to the correctness of the Latin, that is no business of ours. . . . If any of the Popes spoke bad Latin, two or three hundred years before we were born, it should be recollected that it was not in our power to help it. As to the fact of the phrase being made use of by one of the Popes, we will only say to the writer in the *Commercial,* that if he will consult the work entitled *Virorum Illustrium Reliquiæ,* collected by the learned Reisch and published at the Hague, by John and Daniel Steucker, in 1650, a work well known to scholars, he will find that the words, as we have quoted them, were addressed by Pope Alexander VI to his son Cæsar Borgia.

Upon a more elaborate hoax Bryant and Sands were assisted by Professors Anderson and Da Ponte—"a very learned jeu d'esprit," he called it. It was a long letter to the *Evening Post* signed John Smith, in which they took a familiar couplet and translated it through all the principal tongues, ancient and modern, even into several Indian languages. It is hard to believe that these erudite quips had a large audience; but Bryant's ode to Fanny Wright was much admired, and was generally attributed to Halleck, until that gentleman disclaimed it. In these high-spirited productions we see a side of Bryant that largely disappeared under his growing cares and the dignity that increased with his celebrity. We see the Bryant who used to meet with Verplanck and Sands at the house of the latter's father in the hamlet of Hoboken, and make it ring with declamation and uproarious laughter. We see the poet-editor who used to throw off all anxieties and go for long walks, studying nature or chatting with companions, and who once at an evening party apologized for his fatigue by explaining that he had covered the road from Haverstraw to New York, nearly forty miles, that day. Bryant had his fun-loving side, and the few men whom he found closely congenial had no reason to complain of his coldness, as others often did.

But the new editor's most effective impress upon the *Evening Post* was in its political and economic utterances. The journal had already inclined toward a low-tariff policy, for the commercial community of New York opposed protection; but its editorials upon this subject, as upon many others, were feeble. Bryant in the years 1822-24 had been led by his friends the Sedgwicks to study the British economists, Adam Smith, Thornton, and Ricardo, and the debates upon tariff questions prominent in Parliament about 1820. Theodore Sedgwick was a pronounced advocate of free trade, and completely converted Bryant. From the young man's convictions upon this subject flowed his attachment to Jackson as an opponent of protection and monopoly, and his intense dislike of Clay, the leading advocate of the so-called American

tariff system. He had once been a Federalist, and as a boy had written a hot Federalist poem, "The Embargo," but his free-trade views now fast made him an ardent Democrat. His sympathies in commercial legislation were not with his native New England, but with the South.

Martin Van Buren writes in his Autobiography regarding the "American" or protective tariff theories that "To the very exposition of the system and the persistent assaults upon its injustice, and impolicy by the New York *Evening Post,* the country is more indebted for its final overthrow, in this State [New York] at least, than to any other single influence." This was true. Bryant, who was to oppose protection till his death in 1878, lost no time in 1826 in aligning the journal against the legislation then proposed for higher duties upon woolens. He characterized the act of 1824 as "our last and worst" tariff, and that autumn supported his friend Verplanck, with C. C. Cambreleng and Jeromus Johnson, for city seats in Congress as "the avowed opponents of restrictive and prohibitory laws." On Nov. 16 he wrote concerning the woolens bill:

> From 1815 to the present day the demands of our manufacturers have been incessant; and the more bounty they receive, the more exorbitant their claims. It is time that they should be taught to wait, as other branches of industry do, for that revival of trade which can alone give them relief. . . . If the woolen manufactures have grown with unnatural rapidity during the last ten years, no legislative remedy can be applied; it is an evil which in every branch of industry periodically finds its own remedy. All acquainted with the subject know that our manufacturing is our most profitable branch of industry, and we trust Congress will no longer continue to pamper capitalists so highly favored by circumstances.

Almost alone among the Northern newspapers—the Providence *Journal* was its most important ally—the *Evening Post* unsuccessfully combated the tariff of 1828. The newspaper ascribed to it the Paterson textile strike of 1828, and predicted that these industrial outbreaks

would yet equal the Manchester and Birmingham riots. In 1830 it asked where were the busy thousands who had once been employed in the city's shipyards, along the docks, or in establishments for fitting out vessels. A few half-idle men were left; the rest, thanks to the tariff, were "in the miserable abodes of poverty, or in the poorhouse." John Jacob Astor early in 1831 asked for a higher duty upon furs, declaring that he was undersold in the Eastern market by British traders who possessed an advantage in dealing with the Indians. The blankets, strouds, and garments which the savages liked were not made in the United States, but had to be imported from England and to pay a heavy duty, so that the Canadian fur agents could offer much more than the Americans for pelts. The *Evening Post* pounced upon this as an argument not for a tariff upon furs, but for abating the tariff on blankets and clothing.

Naturally, in 1828 the *Post* supported Jackson against J. Q. Adams for the Presidency, Bryant adding new reasons to those Coleman had used against Adams four years earlier. He represented the section that clamored for protection, while Jackson was for a lower tariff. Under the urgings of Senator Rufus King a decade before, the *Post* had said hard things about Jackson, but now it praised him for his long public service, for his Roman strength of will, and for his clearsighted political tenets. When he became President, it supported his Indian policy; it urged him on, as we shall see later, in his determination to crush the United States Bank. The tariff act of 1832, carrying a moderate reduction of duties, it naturally applauded. It was a compromise bill, Bryant admitted. "Yet a large majority of the friends of free trade are satisfied with it, because although not what they would have it, it is still a positive good, it simplifies the collection of the revenue, it removes many of the embarrassments in the way of the fair trader, it diminishes the temptation to smuggling, and it is an approach, if nothing more, to a fair and equal system of duties."

While giving the *Evening Post* a clear-cut, courageous tariff policy, Bryant did much else with the editorial page. Early in 1827 he came out with a far more ringing denunciation of lotteries than it had before printed, and in August he induced it to announce that it would accept no more advertisements relating directly or indirectly to tickets in them. During the same year, following a number of business failures in the city, he wrote in advocacy of a comprehensive national bankruptcy act, such as was not passed till near the end of the century. To his surprise, merchants frowned on the proposal, and the *Evening Post* was left, in his expressive words, "like a public actor who believes he has just said something highly to the purpose, and looks around for applause, but meets only hisses." Later, in 1837, Van Buren formerly recommended a general bankruptcy law to Congress, but again it met with no favor. A number of steamboat accidents caused the journal to press for legislation punishing criminal carelessness and manslaughter by fitting penitentiary sentences. It took up with zeal, following Jackson's inaugural message, the Administration's campaign against the policy of national aid to internal improvements, for Bryant regarded such gifts to special local and political interests as an evil almost as great as protective tariff.

When the first rumblings of nullification were heard from South Carolina in 1829, the *Evening Post* refused to follow those newspapers which treated the subject flippantly. "Every man of common sense must know that if but a single stave is withdrawn from the barrel, it inevitably tumbles to pieces," Bryant warned his readers; "and that whatever be the dimensions of the stave withdrawn, the catastrophe is equally sure and fatal." It was impossible for the journal not to sympathize with the hot-tempered South Carolinians who wanted to destroy the application of the tariff of 1828 to their State. It thought that Col. Hayne was no more wrong about the Constitution than the turncoat Webster was wrong about the tariff; but it warned Calhoun's and Hayne's followers that their project was "insane":

It is the destiny of all republics to be agitated occasionally by the desperate plans of disappointed and ambitious men, resolved to rule or ruin. Such might succeed with a corrupt people, but not in our intelligent and free land. Public opinion has indignantly rejected every proposition to dismember our confederacy, and has pronounced a just judgment on those who prefer themselves to their country—we have already among us more than one blasted monument of selfish ambition. The wreck of our republic is not yet at hand—the people's devotion to the Union is invincible, and the same verdict awaits every man, whether of the North, the South, the East, or the West, who would dare to violate its integrity. (Aug. 29, 1832.)

Whether applauding Jackson as he sternly recalled South Carolina to its senses, or attacking the protectionist doctrines, Bryant tried to open his editorials with a flash of humor or an apposite story. When the *American* delayed a twelvemonth in apologizing for an insult to Jackson, he told the anecdote of the worthy widow whose husband had been dead for seven years and who declared that she could stand it no longer. The opponent who sighed for the time when the Administration would go into a state of "retiracy" reminded him of the Irishman who had rushed for a map when he learned that Napoleon had taken Umbrage. An exchange with a discourteous antagonist recalled the member of the House of Commons who, having said that a colleague was not fit to carry guts to a bear, and being required to apologize, stated: "I retract—you *are* fit to carry guts to a bear." During 1831 many Americans were boasting of having known Louis Philippe when he was an expatriate in this country; and in rebuke to their snobbery, the editor spoke of the man who was proud of having been noticed by a king—the king had said, "Get out of my way, you scoundrel!" Bryant wrote laboriously, not fluently, and made so many corrections that his copy was often almost illegible; but he wrote with polish.

Coleman's health after his runaway accident steadily failed. He had wholly lost the use of his lower limbs, and Bryant tells us that his appearance was remarkable. "He

was of a full make, with a broad chest, muscular arms, which he wielded lightly and easily, and a deep-toned voice; but his legs dangled like strings." The *National Journal* of July, 1827, commented upon his declining strength, in April and June, 1828, *Evening Post* readers were told that he was confined to his home, and on July 14, 1829, he died. Bryant instantly became, what he had previously been in all but name, editor-in-chief. Some assistance was needed, for Coleman's son, though a man of literary tastes, did not wish to enter the office. In 1827 a share in the newspaper had been offered to Robert Sands, but after some hesitation he had declined it. Now an editorial position, and the opportunity of becoming part owner, was tendered William Leggett, a spirited young reformer who had been connected with the *Morning Chronicle,* and more recently had been editor of a frail weekly called the *Critic,* the final numbers of which he had not only written but set up, printed, and delivered himself. He gladly accepted.

Within four and a half years of coming to the city a literary adventurer, Bryant had thus become editor of one of its oldest and most prosperous journals. He had done this not because he had an inborn tendency to journalism, not because he wished to make a newspaper the sounding board for certain ideas or doctrines, but chiefly because he could not live by pure literature, and because the bar, for which he was in many ways well equipped, did not please him. But he did bring to the newspaper great ability and high ideals. No American editor of importance had made such use of the editorial page as he began to make. He had a love of freedom, a sense of justice, and a shrewd judgment of men and affairs, which his retiring nature debarred him from bringing into play in any other way. As an editor, this shy, unsocial man could work at arm's length for the benefit of the people and nation, and except at arm's length he could have had no public career at all. He was willing to toil hard in his chosen calling, and for many years to push poetry, though upon poetry alone he relied for enduring fame, into a

secondary position. He had a keen sense of the dignity that should belong to his profession, and by word as well as example preached against that use of epithet and insult which was then common in it. In one of his early essays he deplored the character of many journalists:

> Yet the vocation of a newspaper editor is a useful and indispensable, and, if rightly exercised, a noble vocation. It possesses this essential element of dignity—that they who are engaged in it are occupied with questions of the highest importance to the happiness of mankind. We cannot see, for our part, why it should not attract men of the first talents and the most exalted virtues. Why should not the discussions of the daily press demand as strong reasoning powers, as large and comprehensive ideas, as profound an acquaintance with principles, eloquence as commanding, and a style of argument as manly and elevated, as the debates of the Senate?

Once established in full charge of the *Evening Post*, with a capable lieutenant, he was able to make rapid, far-reaching, and profitable improvements in the form of the journal. In 1829 it was still closely akin to the *Evening Post* of 1801—four pages of six columns each, much smaller than newspaper pages of to-day, dingily printed and ineffectively made up. When he left for Europe five years later the four pages had seven columns each, and were much larger than present-day pages—great blanket papers. Old John Randolph of Roanoke wrote Bryant complaining that these expansive sheets crinkled so badly in the mail that he had to have his housekeeper iron them out. But the results of the enlargement were an enhanced revenue from advertisements, and a rise of the subscription list, at $10 a year, above 2,000. In 1834 the management boasted that the journal had never been in a more prosperous condition, and that not three other papers in the city were so productive. The whole number of employees, including those in the mechanical departments, was then thirty.

When Bryant wrote his wife in 1826 that the *Evening Post's* profits were $30,000 a year, he overestimated

them; its gross receipts were only that much. But Bryant's share in the newspaper, which was at first one-eighth, which in 1830 became one-fourth, in 1832 was one-third of seven-eighths, and in 1833 was a full third, sufficed to free him from all money cares at once, and within a short time to make him prosperous. The journal's books were balanced each year on Nov. 16, the anniversary of its founding. On that date in 1829, it was found that the net profits were $10,544, of which Bryant's one-eighth made $1,318.04. The next year the net profits had risen to $13,466, and Bryant's quarter share was $3,366.51. In 1831 there was a further increase to $14,429, making Bryant's income $3,507.24. A heavy slump occurred the following twelvemonth, cutting the net profits to $10,220, and the poet's share to $2,980.99, but this was only temporary. For the half-year alone ending May 16, 1833—the figures for the full year are lost—the profits were $6,000.35, making Bryant's income for six months exactly $2,000; and for the full year which closed Nov. 16, 1834, his one-third share yielded no less than $4,646.20. In those days an income of $4,000 or above was handsome, and Bryant was able to sail in the summer of 1834 with a full purse.

The literary world, however, looked with cold disapproval upon Bryant's entrance into the newspaper field, which it believed was occupied by cheap political controversialists, and thought offered an atmosphere hostile to poetry. It found confirmation for this attitude in the marked slackening of Bryant's productiveness as a poet. Of the whole quantity of verse which he wrote during his long lifetime, about 13,000 lines, approximately one-third had been composed before 1829. During 1830 he wrote but thirty lines, during 1831 but sixty, in 1832 only two hundred and twenty-two, and in 1833 apparently none at all; nor was his verse of this period in his best vein. He was too completely occupied in mastering his new calling to cultivate the muse.

"Would that Mr. Bryant was employed in writing poetry . . . and sending back his thoughts to the streams

and mountains which his young eyes were familiar with, and from which he drank his first inspiration!" lamented a writer in the *New England Magazine* for 1831. "But alas! he is busied about far other things, and what he is writing, is as little like poetry, as Gen. Jackson is like Apollo." This writer had called on the editor in his little Pine Street office. "He is a man rather under the middle height than otherwise, with bright blue eyes and an ample forehead, but not very distinguished either in face or person," we are told. "His manners are quiet and unassuming, and marked with a slight dash of diffidence; and his conversation (when he does converse, for he is more used to thinking than talking), is remarkably free from pretension, and is characterized by good sense rather than genius." Why could he not have remained a lawyer in Great Barrington, amid his Berkshire hills and brooks?

We cannot close this notice without again expressing our sorrow at the nature of Mr. Bryant's present occupation, and that a man capable of writing poetry to make so many hearts throb, and so many eyes glisten with delight, should be lending himself to an employment in which the greater the success the more occasion there is for regret, for it must arise from the exertion of those very qualities which we are least willing a poet should possess. "'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis pitiful, that" he should hang up his own cunning harp upon the willows, and take to blowing a brazen and discordant trumpet in the ranks of faction.

An early number of the *Southern Literary Messenger* regretted that Bryant was to be found "dashing in the political vortex" with those who "engage in party squabbles." The New York *Courier and Enquirer*, in an utterance of 1832 which is to be discounted because of editorial jealousy, remarked that "he has embarked in a pursuit not suited to his genius and utterly at variance with all his studies and habits of mind. We wish him a better fate than can ever be his while doomed to follow a business for which he has not a solitary qualification, and compelled to give utterance to sentiments he most cordially despises."

To a certain extent Bryant agreed with these writers. He did not believe journalism an unworthy or undignified occupation. In the *Evening Post* of July 30, 1830, he gave reasons for holding the contrary opinion, descanting upon the value of the opportunity to guide the thinking of thousands. "In combating error in all shapes and disguises," he wrote, it was ample compensation for an editor's trials "to perceive that you are understood by the intelligent, and appreciated by the candid, and that truth and correct principles are gradually extending their sway through your efforts." But he had no attachment as yet to the editorial career, he wanted with all his heart to have leisure for pure literature, and he meant to get out of the newspaper office as quickly and finally as possible. He bracketed it with the law as a "wrangling profession," and talked of being chained to the oar. Always fond of travel, he escaped from his desk after 1830 as much as he possibly could. In January, 1832, he took a trip to Washington, making the establishment of a regular Washington correspondence his excuse, and had a conversation of three quarters of an hour there with Jackson. That spring he made an excursion to Illinois, to visit his brothers. During the summer of 1833 he went to Montreal and Quebec. When he took passage abroad on June 24, 1834, he hoped that the business capacity of Michael Burnham and the editorial capacity of William Leggett would make anything but intermittent attention by him to the *Evening Post* thenceforth unnecessary. "I have been employed long enough with the management of a daily newspaper, and desire leisure for literary occupations that I love better," he later wrote his brother. "It was not my intention when I went to Europe to return to the business of conducting a newspaper." He hoped that his third share would support him.

How these expectations were suddenly wrecked, and how Bryant was brought back by harsh necessity to rescue the *Evening Post* from ruin, is a dramatic story.

CHAPTER SIX

WILLIAM LEGGETT ACTING EDITOR; DEPRESSION, RIVALRY, AND THREATENED RUIN

ONE of the most popular pieces of sculpture the country has ever known, Horatio Greenough's "Chaunting Cherubs," was being widely discussed in the early thirties, as was Hiram Powers's "Greek Slave," a little later. In a witty moment the *Courier and Enquirer* christened Bryant and William Leggett, for Leggett also wrote poetry, "the chaunting cherubs of the *Evening Post.*" The name had outward appropriateness, but it would really have been more fitting to call Leggett a spouting volcano.

While Bryant controlled the journal, it abstained from any harsh abuse of other journals. His rule was to notice no personal attacks, and to make none in retaliation. Only once in fifty years did he, passing in the street an editorial adversary who had given him the lie direct, lose control of himself. The diarist Philip Hone tells the story under date of April 20, 1831:

> While I was shaving this morning at eight o'clock, I witnessed from the front window an encounter in the street nearly opposite, between William C. Bryant and William L. Stone; the former one of the editors of the *Evening Post,* and the latter editor of the *Commercial Advertiser.* The former commenced the attack by striking Stone over the head with a cowskin; after a few blows the men closed, and the whip was wrested from Bryant and carried off by Stone. When I saw them first, two younger persons were engaged, but soon discontinued their fight.

The next day Bryant made a public statement of this incident, pointing out the gross provocation that he had received, but apologizing to his readers for having taken the law into his own hands. Particularly as there developed some doubt whether Col. Stone was the author

of the attack, he could never hear the matter referred to without showing his chagrin and regret.

But Bryant had no sooner left the office for Europe than it became plain that Leggett had no such scruples. In one brief paragraph he managed to call the editor of the *Star* a wretch, liar, coward, and a vile purchased tool who would do anything for money. The "venomous drivel" of the *Commercial Advertiser* might sometimes require notice, he wrote a few days later, but his contempt for the editor was "so supreme that to us, personally, he is as if he were not—a perfect non-entity." In the autumn Assembly campaign Leggett shotted his guns, and on Sept. 23 and 24 let off broadsides that shook the town. He accused the *Daily Advertiser* of "a vile untruth"; he called the editor of the *American* a "detestable caitiff," a "craven wretch, spotted with all kinds of vices," and "a hireling slave and public incendiary"; while he characterized the *Courier and Enquirer* as a blustering, bullying sheet, reeking with falsehood, pandering to the vulgar, profligate, impudent, inane, and inciting men to riot and bloodshed. On Sept. 26 Leggett was able to fill a column with answers. "The editor is deranged," said the *American;* he should be "committed to Bedlam," averred the *Gazette;* "a writ *de lunatico*" is needed, chimed in the *Courier;* this, said the *Star,* "is too true to make a jest of"; and the Boston *Atlas* professed horror at "the ferocious, mad, and bloody words of this desperate print."

Leggett was not deranged, but simply in full fighting trim, and showing the defects of his really sterling virtues. By sheer slashing vigor as a political writer he achieved in a half dozen years upon the *Evening Post* a permanent fame as a reformer and controversialist. Whittier, in his essays, compares Leggett with Hampden and Vane, and declares that "no one has labored more perseveringly, or, in the end, more successfully, to bring the practice of American democracy into conformity with its professions." His poetical tribute to "the bold reformer" and his "free and honest thought, the angel ut-

terance of an upright mind," is better known. Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., believed that but for Leggett's untimely end he might have made one of the greatest names in American history. Bryant's memorial tribute:

> The words of fire that from his pen
> Were flung upon the fervid page,
> Still move, still shake the hearts of men,
> Amid a cold and coward age,

was no exaggeration, but true for the whole generation which followed Leggett's death. The editor's political writings were perhaps the most potent force in shaping the ideas of democracy held by Walt Whitman, who in 1847 wrote of the necessity of following the doctrines of the "great Jefferson and the glorious Leggett," and who in his old age spoke to Horace Traubel of his high admiration for him. A recent historical writer has said that Leggett was "one of the most sincere and brilliant apostles of democracy that America has ever known."

When Leggett became junior editor of the *Evening Post* he was known solely as a writer of essays, stories, and verse. He was a New Yorker by birth, but had been educated at Georgetown, D. C., had been given a taste of Illinois prairie life in his later youth, and had entered the navy as a midshipman at the age of twenty, resigning six years later because of the overbearing conduct of his commander. A volume of his poems, "Leisure Hours at Sea," and some tales of pioneer and sailor life which he published in annuals and magazines, gave him a sufficient reputation to enable him to found his weekly miscellany, the *Critic*. He stipulated with Bryant that he should not be required to write upon political topics, "on which he had no settled opinions, and for which he had no taste"; but within a few months he found himself almost wholly devoted to them. Bryant imbued him with his own ardent free-trade doctrines, and his own warm admiration for Jackson and Jacksonian measures. He was eight years younger than the senior editor. His associates describe him as a man of middle stature, com-

pact frame, great endurance, and a constitution naturally strong, but somewhat impaired by an attack of the yellow fever while serving with the United States squadron in the West Indies. His naval training had given him a dignified bearing, his address was easy, and his affability and mildness of manner surprised those who had known him only by his fiery writings. He was fond of study; and his ability to write fluently in his crowded, littered back room on Pine Street, the crash of the presses in his ear, amid a thousand distractions, amazed everybody.

Bryant and Leggett had now labored together five years, 1829-1834. The chief local occurrence in this period was the great cholera epidemic of 1832, causing an exodus from the city which the *Evening Post* of August 6 estimated at above 100,000. The two editors worked manfully, though perhaps hardly candidly, to allay the panic. Although the first case appeared on June 26, so late as July 13 they maintained that there was no epidemic, in the strict sense of the word; and ten days later they denied with vehemence the allegation of the *Courier and Enquirer,* which was exaggerating the plague, that two *Evening Post* employees had died of cholera.

Throughout the great war over the Bank of the United States the *Evening Post* had stood by the President. Jackson appealed to the loyalty of Bryant and Leggett in equal degree, but differently. To Leggett he was "the man of the people," a son of the frontier, a democrat from heel to crown. In Bryant he awakened the same admiration that he aroused in Irving, Cooper, Bancroft, and in Landor abroad: admiration for his adventurous heroism, his unspotted honesty, his simplicity, his stern directness, his tenacity in pressing forward to his goal. One had to be either the wholehearted admirer of "Old Hickory" or his wholehearted opponent, and as early as Jackson Day in 1828 Bryant had become the former, writing for a dinner at Masonic Hall an ode which, according to Verplanck, threw Van Buren into ecstasies. Not a single measure of Jackson's, not even his wholesale removals from office under the spoils system, was cen-

sured by the *Evening Post,* and by 1832, after the end of nullification, it was hailing him as "the man destined to stand in history by the side of Washington, the one bearing the proud title of the Father of his Country, the other the scarcely less illustrious one of Preserver of the Union."

All Jackson's charges against the Bank—that it was a source of political corruption, that it was monopolistic, that it was hostile to popular interests and dangerous to the government, that it was unsafely managed—were echoed by Bryant and Leggett. Probably only the accusation that it had gone into politics was fully warranted, but the *Evening Post* pressed them all. Speaking of the Bank's "enormous powers" and "its barefaced bribery and corruption," it applauded Jackson's veto of the bill to recharter it, and his withdrawal in 1833 of the government deposits in it. When the Bank curtailed its loans to meet the withdrawal of these deposits, the editors thought that it was trying to coerce the people and government, by threatening a panic, into yielding. "The object of the Bank is to create a pressure for money, to impair the confidence of business men in each other, and to keep the community at large in a state of great uncertainty and confusion, in the hope that men will at last say, 'let us have the Bank rechartered, rather than that . . . the whole country should be thrown into distress.' " The alliance of the chief statesmen in Congress on behalf of the Bank drew from the journal three interesting characterizations (March 31, 1834):

> Clay:— . . . The parent and champion of the tariff and internal improvements; of a system directly opposed to the interests and prosperity of every merchant in the United States, and calculated and devised for the purpose of organizing an extensive and widespread scheme through which the different portions of the United States might be bought up in detail. . . . By assuming the power of dissipating the public revenue in local improvements, by which one portion of the community would be benefited at the expense of many others, Congress acquired the means of influencing and controlling the politics of every State in the Union,

and of establishing a rigid, invincible consolidated government. By assuming the power of protecting any class or portion of the industry of this country, by bounties in the shape of high duties on foreign importations, they placed the labor and industry of the people entirely at their own disposal, and usurped the prerogative of dispensing all the blessings of Providence at pleasure. . . .

It is against this great system for making the rich richer, the poor poorer, and thus creating those enormous disproportions of wealth which are always the forerunner of the loss of freedom; it is against this great plan of making the resources of the General Government the means of obtaining the control of the States by an adroit species of political bribery, that General Jackson has arrayed himself. . . . He has arrested the one by his influence, the other by his veto.

Calhoun:—Reflecting and honest men may perhaps wonder to see this strange alliance between the man by whom the tariff was begotten, nurtured, and brought to a monstrous maturity, and him who carried his State to the verge of rebellion in opposition to that very system. By his means and influence, this great Union was all but dissolved, and in all probability would at this moment lie shattered into fragments, had it not been for the energetic and prompt patriotism of the stern old man who then said, "The Union—it must be preserved." Even at this moment Mr. Calhoun . . . still threatens to separate South Carolina from the confederacy, if she is not suffered to remain in it with the privilege of a *veto* on the laws of the Union.

Webster:—Without firmness, consistency, or political courage to be a leader, except in one small section of the Union, he seems to crow to any good purpose only on his own dunghill, and is a much greater fowl in his own barnyard than anywhere else. He is a good speaker at the bar and in the House; but he is a much greater lawyer than statesman, and far more expert in detailing old arguments than fruitful in inventing new ones. He is not what we should call a great man, much less a great politician; and we should go so far as to question the power of his intellect, did it not occasionally disclose itself in a rich exuberance of contradictory opinions. A man who can argue so well on both sides of a question cannot be totally destitute of genius.

And here these three gentlemen, who agree in no one single principle, who own no one single feeling in common, except that of hatred to the old hero of New Orleans, stand battling side by side. The author and champion of the tariff, and the man who on every occasion denounced it as a violation of the Constitution;

the oracle of nullification and the oracle of consolidation; the trio of antipathies; the union of contradiction; the consistency of inconsistencies; the coalition of oil, vinegar, and mustard; the dressing in which the great political salad is to be served up to the people.

In this aggressive writing we see Leggett's pen; and it was only after Bryant left the *Evening Post* in his sole charge that it entered upon its hottest fighting. The first episode, its defense of abolitionists in the right of free speech, was highly creditable to it.

The abolitionists had begun to arouse popular resentment in New York so early as 1833; on Oct. 2 of that year, a meeting of the "friends of immediate abolition" at Clinton Hall had been broken up by a tumultuous crowd, which adjourned to Tammany Hall and there denounced the agitators. Lewis Tappan, head of one of the largest silk houses in the city, and for a short time after 1827 editor of the *Journal of Commerce;* his brother Arthur Tappan; Joshua Leavitt, the Rev. Dr. F. F. Cox, the Rev. Mr. Ludlow, and several other Protestant clergymen made up a constellation only less active than that formed in Boston by William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Samuel J. May, and John Pierpont. During the spring of 1834 these men continued their speechmaking, and Ludlow and Cox went so far as to appeal to all Northern negroes for support, and to defend intermarriage between whites and blacks. Few New Yorkers then regarded Southern slavery as a national shame, and almost none had any patience with abolition. Most of the press denounced the movement emphatically; the *Evening Post* refused to do this, though it called it wild and visionary.

On July 7 some negroes repaired to the Chatham Street Chapel for a belated celebration of the Fourth, and at the same time the Sacred Music Society met there for practice, claiming a prior right of occupancy. Patriotism and music were forgotten in the ensuing mêlée. The *Evening Post* had felt that trouble was brewing, and it raised a warning voice:

The story is told in the morning papers in very inflammatory

language, and the whole blame is cast upon the negroes; yet it seems to us, from those very statements themselves, that, as usual, there was fault on both sides, and especially on that of the whites. It seems to us, also, that those who are opposed to the absurd and mad schemes of the immediate abolitionists, use means against that scheme which are neither just nor politic. We have noticed a great many tirades of late, in certain prints, the object of which appears to be to excite the public mind to strong hostility to the negroes generally, and to the devisers of the immediate emancipation plan, and not merely to the particular measure represented. This community is too apt to run into excitements; and those who are now trying to get up an excitement against the negroes will have much to answer for, should their efforts be successful. . . .

Other journals, especially the *Courier and Enquirer*, continued their provocative utterances and called for public meetings to protest against the abolition movement. The result was that disturbances occurred on the night of Wednesday, the ninth, and reached their climax on Friday in scenes not equaled until the Draft Riots.

At an hour after dark on Friday, Lewis Tappan's store was attacked and its windows were broken. At ten o'clock the mob broke in the doors of Dr. Cox's church on Laight Street, and demolished its interior, after which it made a rush for his home on Charlton Street, but found it picketed by the police and retired. The next objective was Mr. Ludlow's church on Spring Street, which was half demolished, together with the Session House next door. Thereupon the rioters made for the principal negro quarter of the town, in the region about Five Points. The Five Points has figured on some of the blackest pages of New York's history. It was here that fourteen negroes were burned in 1740 during the so-called Negro Insurrection; here the Seventh Regiment was called out in 1857 to quell a riot; here the "Dead Rabbits" later fought the "Bowery Boys," and here stood the notorious Old Brewery that the Five Points Mission displaced. But it never saw more panic and outrage than on that night. The St. Philip's African Episcopal Church in Centre Street and a negro church in Anthony Street

were left mere battered shells by the mob; a negro schoolhouse in Orange Street was wrecked; and twenty houses were wholly or partly destroyed, and much of the contents stolen. Innocent negroes were beaten into unconsciousness. The colored people by hundreds fled northward into the open fields. Just before midnight infantry and cavalry arrived, but took no punitive measures. The *Evening Post* called for unremitting severity:

> Let them be fired upon, if they dare collect together again to prosecute their infamous designs. Let those who make the first movement toward sedition be shot down like dogs—and thus teach to their infatuated followers a lesson which no milder course seems sufficient to inculcate. This is no time for expostulation or remonstrance. . . . We would recommend that the whole military force of the city be called out, that large detachments be stationed wherever any ground exists to anticipate tumultuary movements, that smaller bodies patrol the streets in every part of the city, and that the troops be directed to fire upon the first disorderly assemblage that refuses to disperse at the bidding of lawful authority.

The *Post's* uncompromising stand was thoroughly unpopular—unpopular with not merely the ignorant, but with most business men. A Boston journal noted that "the *Evening Post* was the only daily paper in that city which condemned the riots with manly denunciation, without a single sneering allusion to the abolitionists, and in return for this manifestation of a love of law and order, the *Courier* assailed the *Post* as a promoter of the plan of parti-colored amalgamation, and strongly hinted that the mob ought to direct its vengeance against that office." This was true. The *Courier and Enquirer* had said that Editor Leggett, who had dared defend the vile abolitionists, richly deserved the severest castigation which had been planned for those who would make their daughters the paramours of the negro.

In the summer of 1835 Leggett showed even greater courage upon the same subject. The postmaster of Charleston, S. C., had refused to deliver abolitionist letters and documents upon the ground that they were incen-

diary and insurrectionary, and on Aug. 4 Postmaster-General Kendall upheld him in a letter stating that by no act or order would he aid in giving circulation to documents of the kind barred. It must be remembered that the *Evening Post* had thus far stood by Jackson's administration in every particular. It must also be remembered that Leggett at this time thoroughly disapproved of the abolition movement as untimely and impracticable. But he saw in Kendall's measure a bureaucratic censorship in its most odious and arbitrary form, and he called the action an outrage:

> Neither the general postoffice, nor the general government itself, possesses any power to prohibit the transportation by mail of abolition tracts. On the contrary, it is the bounden duty of the government to protect the abolitionists in their constitutional right of free discussion; and opposed, sincerely and zealously as we are, to their doctrinces and practices, we should be still more opposed to any infringement of their political or civil rights. If the government once begins to discriminate as to what is orthodox and what heterodox in opinion, what is safe and what unsafe in tendency, farewell, a long farewell, to our freedom.

Only three of the really influential newspapers of the land declined to admit that Kendall had either done right, or had simply chosen the lesser of two evils: the Boston *Courier,* edited by J. T. Buckingham, the Cincinnati *Gazette,* edited by Charles Hammond, and the *Post.*

Unpopular as was the *Evening Post's* defense of free speech, its stand upon financial and economic questions was far more heartily detested. It rapidly ceased, after its first attacks upon the Bank, to hold its old position as a representative of the city's commercial interests. It is true that some rich New Yorkers felt a jealousy of the Bank because it belonged to Philadelphia, while others stood loyally with the Democratic Party in denouncing it. But Gulian Verplanck and Ogden Hoffman, close friends of the *Post,* were typical of many who went over to the Bank's side. Not a few business men affiliated with Tammany joined the ranks of Jackson's enemies. Historical

opinion inclines to the view that Jackson did not have a sufficient case against the Bank, which was a salutary institution, and certainly New York commercial circles believed this. A majority of the voters were with Jackson. Thurlow Weed told a friend that all of Webster's unanswerable arguments for the Bank would not win one-tenth the ballots won by two sentences in Jackson's veto message relating to European stockholders and wicked special privilege. But it was not the mass of poor voters on which a sixpenny journal like the *Evening Post* relied for sustenance, but upon the professional and business men.

Leggett's cardinal conviction, expressed with a fire and energy then unequaled in journalism, was that the great enemy of democracy is monopoly. He hated and assailed all special incorporations, for in those days they usually carried very special privileges. Charters were obtained by wire-pulling and legislative corruption, he said, to put a few men, as the ferry-owners in New York City, in a position where they could gouge the public. He wished banking placed upon such a basis that legislative incorporation, exclusive in nature, would not be needed. He wanted all franchises abolished, and would have forbidden any grant to a company of the exclusive right to build a turnpike, canal, railroad, or water-system between two given points. He objected even to the incorporation of colleges and churches, quoting Adam Smith to show that his views upon this head were less eccentric than they seemed. Joint stock partnerships, he believed, would meet all business necessities. The Legislature should pass one general law, which will allow any set of men, who choose to associate together for any purpose, to form themselves into that convenient kind of partnership known by the name of incorporation"; so that any group would be permitted freely to form an insurance company, a bank, or a college granting degrees. This, of course, would not exclude governmental supervision. Although there were then grave abuses in monopolistic incorporation, Leggett pushed his doctrine quite too far.

Equality was Leggett's watchword. Those were the days when State Legislatures were abolishing the last property restrictions upon suffrage, and vitriolic was the wrath which the *Evening Post* poured upon all who opposed the movement. The whole period it pictured as a battle between men and money; between "silk-stocking, morocco-booted, high-living, white-gloved gentlemen, to be tracked only by the marks of their carriage wheels," and hardworking freemen. It objected to the theory that the state was an aggregation of social strata, one above the other, and maintained that all useful citizens should fare alike. Upon the word "useful," in Carlylean vein, it insisted, for they must be "producers." Tariffs, internal improvements at the expense of State and nation, and special incorporations, were violations of equality; while the spirit of speculation was condemned as creating a "paper aristocracy." On Dec. 6, 1834, Leggett vindicated the right of the laboring classes to unite in trade unions, a right then widely denied. It is clear that his ultra-democratic crusade was essentially an accompaniment of the rise of a new industrialism. It had its affinities with the frontier equalitarianism personified by Jackson, but its primary aim was the protection of the toiling urban masses.

Leggett was upon firm ground when in 1835 he began to attack the inflation, gambling, and business unsoundness of which every day afforded fresh proofs. There was grotesque speculation in Southern cotton lands, Maine timber, New York and Philadelphia real estate, and the Western lands enhanced in value by the Erie Canal. Capital was abundant, prices were rising, and every one seemed to be getting rich. Most Northern States were undertaking costly internal improvements with a reckless faith in the future. Leggett looked with two-fold alarm and indignation upon the flood of paper money then pouring from small banks all over the country. Depreciated paper, in the first place, was used to lower the real wages of mechanics; in the second place, he maintained that the grant to State banks of the power to issue

bills placed the measure of value in the hands of speculators, to be extended or contracted according to their own selfish wishes. On Dec. 24, 1834, just before the Legislature met, the *Evening Post* published an appeal to Gov. Marcy. The banknotes, it said, were driving specie out of circulation, and causing a fever of reckless speculation. "Already our merchants are importing largely. Stocks have risen in value, and land is selling at extravagant rates. Everything begins to wear the highly-prosperous aspect which foretokens commercial revulsion." It recommended that the State should forbid the issue of any banknotes for less than $5.

"For these views," Leggett wrote in March, "we have been bitterly reviled." On June 20, 1835, the *Post* published a striking editorial entitled "Out of Debt," in allusion to the current boast that the nation owed no one. On the contrary, it stated, the people "are plunging deeper and deeper into the bottomless pit of unredeemed and irredeemable obligations." It estimated that the six hundred banks of the nation had issued paper in excess of $200,000,000. "Who will pay the piper for all this political and speculative dancing?" The panic of 1837 gave the answer.

By his ringing editorials, written day after day at white heat, a really noble series, Leggett became the prophet of the Loco-Foco party, which arose as a radical wing of the New York Democracy and lived only two years, 1835-37. The origin of the name is a familiar story. On Oct. 25, 1835, a meeting was held at Tammany Hall to nominate a Congressman; the conservative Democrats named their man in accordance with a prearranged plan, put out the lights, and went home; the anti-monopoly radicals produced tallow candles from their pockets, lit them with loco-foco matches, and nominated a rival candidate. Leggett was not an active politician. But the Loco-Foco mass-meetings of the two ensuing years, and their two State conventions, enunciated the same equalitarian doctrines which Leggett had begun to preach in 1834.

Not only those whose interests were affected by Leggett's anti-monopoly, anti-speculation, anti-aristocracy crusade, but many other staid, moderate men, were horrified by it. He was charged with Utopianism, agrarianism, Fanny-Wrightism, Jacobinism, and Jack Cade-ism. His writings were said to set class against class, and to threaten the nation with anarchy. Gov. William M. Marcy called Leggett a "knave." The advance of the Loco-Foco movement was likened to the great fire and the great cholera plague of these years. When Chief Justice Marshall died in the summer of 1835, Leggett unsparingly assailed him and Hamilton as men who had tried "to change the character of the government from popular to monarchical," and to destroy "the great principle of human liberty." Marshall was regarded by most propertied New Yorkers as the very sheet-anchor of the Constitution, and for them to see him denounced as a man who had always strengthened government at the expense of the people was too much. Ex-Mayor Philip Hone was handed that editorial on an Albany steamboat by Charles King, and dropped the journal with the vehement ejaculation, "Infamous!" "This is absolutely a species of impiety for which I want words to express my abhorrence," he entered in his diary.

For the courage, the eloquence, and the burning sincerity of Leggett's brief editorship we must heartily admire him; but it cannot be denied that he made the *Evening Post*, for the first and last time in its career, extravagant. He was public-spirited in all that he wrote; his prophecy of a financial crash was shrewd; in defending the abolitionists against persecution he was in advance of his generation; and his comments upon many minor questions of the day were sound. But the newspaper lacked balance, and its influence was perhaps not so great as when Bryant had been at hand to exercise a restraint upon Leggett. Such an impetuous man could not spare his own health. Almost daily the *Evening Post* had carried an editorial of from 1,000 to 2,000 words. On Oct. 15, 1835, these utterances broke abruptly off, and it

became known that Leggett was gravely ill of a bilious fever. His place was temporarily supplied by Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., and then by Charles Mason, an able lawyer of the city. Bryant, loitering along the Rhine, had hastily to be recalled.

Although Leggett had boasted the previous May that the *Evening Post* had more subscribers than ever before and an undiminished revenue from advertisements, its condition was rapidly declining when the editor fell ill. For this there were a number of reasons. Leggett's radicalism had offended many sober mercantile advertisers. He, like some other editors, had objected to blackening the newspaper's pages with the small conventional cuts of ships and houses used to draw attention to advertisements, and had thereby lost patronage. After the death of Michael Burnham, in the summer of 1835, the business management had fallen to a scamp named Hanna, who was generally drunk and always insolent. Warning symptoms of the approaching panic were in the air, money becoming so tight late in 1835 that reputable mercantile firms could not discount their notes a year ahead for less than 30 per cent. Leggett, finally, had offended valuable government friends. As he wrote (Sept. 5, 1835):

> We once expressed dislike . . . of the undignified tone of one of Mr. Woodberry's official letters, as Secretary of the Treasury, to Nicholas Biddle; and the Treasury advertisements were thenceforward withheld. The Secretary of the Navy, having acted with gross partiality in regard to a matter recently tried by a naval court-martial, we had the temerity to censure his conduct; and of course we could look for no further countenance from that quarter. The Navy Commissioners, being Post-Captains, . . . have taken in high dudgeon our inquiry into the oppression and tyranny practised by their order; and "stop our advertisements!" is the word of command established in such cases. When the *Evening Post* exposed the duplicity of Samuel Swartwout, the Collector of the Port, it at once lost all further support from the Custom House. And now, having censured the doctrines of Mr. Kendall and the practice of Mr. Gouverneur, the postoffice advertising is withdrawn, of course.

II

While Bryant was in Europe, while the *Evening Post* in the spring of 1835 was beginning its abrupt plunge toward financial disaster, there occurred the simultaneous birth of the New York *Herald* and a new journalism. Its immediate effect upon the *Post* was small; its effect in the long run upon all newspapers was profound. It was to not only a half-wrecked *Evening Post,* but to revolutionized journalistic conditions, that Bryant returned from Heidelberg.

When Bryant and Leggett had taken full charge of the *Evening Post* in 1829, the New York newspapers were a quarrelsome group of sixpenny dailies, some political, some commercial, and in their news features all slow, dull, and half-filled by modern standards. The best-known morning journal was the *Courier and Enquirer,* of which the editor and after a year the sole proprietor was James Watson Webb, a rich, hot-tempered, exceedingly handsome young man of twenty-seven, as mercurial as any Southerner, with a native taste for fighting which had been developed by his West Point education and some years in the army. Webb knew the use of the sword, pistol, and cane decidedly better than that of the pen. The *Evening Post* well characterized him as "a fussy, blustering, quarrelsome fellow." He repeatedly assaulted fellow-editors in the street; he repeatedly journeyed to Washington or Albany to tweak somebody's nose or exchange shots; and while our envoy to Brazil he wanted to kill the British Minister there. When in the early thirties Congressman Cilley of Maine charged him with taking a bribe, and refused to accept Webb's challenge on the ground that the latter was no gentleman, the impetuous editor persuaded his second to challenge and kill Cilley. Ten years later Webb provoked Congressman Thomas F. Marshall, of Kentucky, by coarse attacks, into fighting a duel, and was sentenced to two years in the State prison. Greeley and many others of note signed

a petition for a pardon, which Bryant indignantly opposed, but Gov. Seward granted it.

Chief among the *Courier's* morning rivals was the *Journal of Commerce,* founded in 1827 as an advocate of the introduction of religion into business affairs, which went into the hands of David Hale and Gerard Hallock after the abolitionist silk merchant, Tappan, gave it up. It refused to advertise theaters and other amusement-places, and was considered a little fanatical, but it showed extraordinary enterprise for that day in news-gathering. In 1828 it stationed a swift craft off Sandy Hook to intercept incoming ships and bring the first European news up the harbor, and it subsequently arranged a relay of fast horses from Philadelphia to bring the Congressional debates a day in advance of its competitors. Webb followed the example, extending the pony relay to Washington, and spending from $15,000 to $20,000 a year on his clipper boats. Some episodes of this rivalry are amusing. After the fall of Warsaw in the Polish war, the *Courier and Enquirer,* to punish its competitors for news-stealing, printed a small edition denying—upon the strength of dispatches by the ship *Ajax*—the reported fall, and saw that copies reached the doorstep of all morning journals. There was no such arrival as the *Ajax.* Several newspapers reprinted the bogus news without credit, the *Journal of Commerce* doing so in its country but not its city edition; and great was the *Courier's* sarcastic glee.

Though Webb was too explosive, too dissipated, and too slender in ability to be a great editor, he had the money to obtain able lieutenants. One was the Jewish journalist M. M. Noah, who had edited the *National Advocate* in Coleman's day, and written patriotic dramas. In 1825, conceiving that the time had come for the "restoration of the Jews," Noah had appeared at Grand Island, near Buffalo, in the insignia of one of the Hebrew monarchs, and dedicated it as the future Jerusalem and capital of the Jewish nation, calling it Ararat in honor of the original Noah. Disillusioned in this project, Noah bought a share in the *Courier* in 1831, and in 1832 re-

signed it. Another worker on the *Courier* was Charles King; James K. Paulding contributed; and in the forties it obtained Henry J. Raymond's services. But the most notable of its writers when the year 1829 ended was a smart young Scotchman named James Gordon Bennett, who, after knocking about from Boston to Charleston in various employments—he had even essayed to open a commercial school in New York—had made a shining success in 1828 as Washington correspondent for Webb.

Bennett, at this time highly studious, had examined in the Congressional Library one day a copy of Horace Walpole's letters, and at once began to imitate them in his correspondence, making it lively, full of gossip, and even vulgarly frank in descriptions of men of the day. Some Washington ladies were said to be indebted to Bennett's glowing pen-pictures for their husbands. He was active in other capacities for the journal—he reported the White-Crowinshield murder trial in Salem, Mass., wrote editorials, squibs, and amusing articles of sorts; and Webb showed how fundamentally lacking he was in editorial discernment when he never let Bennett receive more than $12 a week. In 1832 the homely, thrifty youngster from Banffshire left the *Courier*.

Others among the eleven dailies were the *Commercial Advertiser*, the *Daily Advertiser*, and the *Star*, the last-named being the *Post's* closest rival in evening circulation. Much attention was attracted to the *Daily Advertiser* in 1835 by the Washington letters of Erastus Brooks, a young man who wrote as brightly as Bennett but more soberly. The following year he and his brother James founded the *Express*, also a sixpenny paper, which succeeded against heavy obstacles. Compared with London, the New York field was overcrowded, and no journal had many subscribers; the *Courier* was vastly proud when it printed 3,500 copies a day. Newspapers were sold over the counter at the place of publication, and at a few hotels and coffeehouses, but not on the streets; the first employment of newsboys excited indignation, and was denounced as leading them into vice. Advertising

rates continued ridiculously small. The *Evening Post* and its contemporaries still made the time-honored charge of $40, with a subscription thrown in, for indefinite space; the first insertion of a "square," 8 to 16 lines, cost seventy-five cents, the second and third twenty-five, and later insertions eighteen and three-fourths cents. When the daily advertising of the *Courier* (apart from yearly insertions) reached $55, that sum was thought remarkable.

The harbinger of the new journalism was Benjamin H. Day, a former compositor for the *Evening Post,* who in September, 1833, began issuing the first penny newspaper with sufficient strength to survive, the *Sun.* The idea of this innovation came from London, which had possessed its *Illustrated Penny Magazine* since 1830, sold in huge quantities in New York and other American cities; Bryant had often praised it as an instrument for educating the poor. The *Sun* began with a circulation of 300, which it rapidly increased, until after the publication of the famous "moon hoax" in 1835 it boasted the largest circulation in the world; three years later it distributed 38,000 copies daily. Not until the Civil War did it raise its price above one cent, and it continued to be read by the poor almost exclusively. It was not a political force, for it voiced no energetic editorial opinions, nor was it a better purveyor of intelligence than its neighbors. It showed no more enterprise in news-collecting, its correspondence was inferior, and its appeal, apart from its cheapness and special features, lay in its great volume of help-wanted advertisements.

The new journalism therefore had its real beginning when, on May 6, 1835, in a cellar in Wall Street—not a basement, but a cellar—Bennett established the *Herald.* He had fifteen years' experience, five hundred dollars, two chairs, and a dry-goods box. It also was a penny paper. But its distinction rested upon the fact that it embodied four original ideas in journalism. The first, and most important, was the necessity of a thorough search for all the news. The second was that fixed prin-

ciples are dangerous, and that it is most profitable to be on the winning side. Bennett felt with Hosea Biglow that

> A merciful Providence fashioned us hollow
> In order thet we might our princerples swallow.

The third was the value of editorial audacity—that is, of impudence, mockery, and Mephistophelian persiflage —for Bennett had seen in Boston that the saucy, indecorous *Galaxy* had been universally abused, and universally read. The fourth idea embodied in the *Herald* was the value of audacity in the news; of unconventionality, vulgarity, and sensationalism.

Above all, Bennett gave New York city the news, with a comprehensiveness, promptness, and accuracy till then undreamed of. At first, compelled by poverty to do all the work himself, and unable to hire his first reporter for more than three months, he found the task hard. But within five weeks (June 13) he began publishing a daily financial article, something that Bryant, Col. Stone, Webb, and Hallock had not thought of, although thousands were just as keenly interested in the exchange then as now. From one to four every business afternoon, having labored in his cellar since five in the morning, Bennett was making the rounds of the business offices, collecting stock-tables and gossip. Local intelligence began to be thoroughly gathered. Incomparably the best reports of the great fire of December, 1835, are to be found in the *Herald*. He was the first editor to open a bureau of foreign correspondence in Europe, something that Bryant might well have done. He soon went the *Courier* and *Journal of Commerce* one better by keeping his clipper off Montauk Point, and running a special train the length of Long Island with the European newspapers. A *Herald* reporter, notebook in hand, began to be seen in precincts which had never known a journalist. In 1839 Bennett made bold to report the proceedings of church sects at their annual meetings, and though the denominational officers were at first indignant, they became mollified when they saw their names in print. Important trials were for

the first time followed in detail, and important public speeches reproduced in their entirety. The interview was invented.

This "picture of the world" was served up with a sauce. Bennett had no reverence and no taste. He announced his own forthcoming marriage in 1840 in appalling headlines: "To the Readers of the *Herald*—Declaration of Love—Caught at Last—Going to be Married—New Movement in Civilization." The *Herald* was not a year old before it was ridiculing republican institutions, and in shocking terms assailing the Catholic Church, the Pope, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. When the Erie Railroad began its infamous early career, Bryant attacked the schemes of the speculators with great effect, and helped stop the first effort of the promoters to sack the State treasury. The *Herald's* comment was brief and characteristic: "The New York and Erie Railroad is to break ground in a few days. We hope they will break nothing else." James Parton quotes one of Bennett's impudent paragraphs as representative. "Great trouble among the Presbyterians just now. The question in dispute is, whether or not a man can do anything toward saving his own soul." In even the few and brief book-notices this tone was maintained. Reviewing an Annual Register which told him that there were 1,492 rogues in the State Prison, Bennett added: "And God only knows how many out of prison, preying upon the community, in the shape of gamblers, blacklegs, speculators, and politicians."

By the prominence it gave to crimes of violence, divorces, and seduction, and by its bold personal gossip, the *Herald* fully earned the name of a "sensation journal." Most of the other newspapers, the magazines, and the Catholic and Protestant pulpits, denounced it roundly. The *Evening Post* did not mention it by name, but in 1839 condemned "the nauseous practice which some of our journals have imitated from the London press of adopting a light and profligate tone in the daily reports of instances of crime, depravity, and intemperance which fall

under the eye of our municipal police, making them the subject of elaborate witticisms, and spicing them with gross allusions." The *Herald's* cynical contempt for consistent principles increased the dislike with which it was viewed. In general it was Hunker Democratic, and built up a large Southern following, but it supported Harrison in 1840 and Taylor in 1848. The English traveler, Edward Dicey, said that it had but two standing rules, one to support the existing Administration, the other to attack the land of Bennett's birth. Dicey found that as late as Civil War times Bennett was barred from society, and that when he went to stay at a watering place near New York, the other guests at the hotel told the landlord that he must choose between the editor's patronage and their own—and Bennett left.

But upon Bennett's success was largely founded that of other great morning newspapers of the next decades. "It would be worth my while, sir, to give a million dollars," said Henry J. Raymond, "if the devil would come and tell me every evening, as he does Bennett, what the people of New York would like to read about next morning." The *Sun* was given new life when it passed into the hands of Moses Y. Beach in 1838. Greeley, with a capital of $1,000, founded the *Tribune* in April, 1841, to meet the need for a penny paper of Whig allegiance. The sixpenny journals, the *Evening Post, Commercial Advertiser, Courier, Journal of Commerce,* and *Express,* perforce learned much from the *Herald* about news-gathering. Years later the *Evening Post* described the new spirit of enterprise which had seized upon journalism by the early forties:

> In those days expresses were run on election nights, and in times of great excitement the *Herald* and *Tribune* raced locomotive engines against each other in order to get the earliest news; on one occasion, we remember, the sharp reporter engaged for the *Tribune* "appropriating" an engine which was waiting, under steam, for the use of the opposition agent, and so beating the *Herald* at its own game. . . . Nor was the competition confined to enterprises like these. For want of the boundless facilities now

afforded by the organized enterprises of the newspaper offices, there were curious experiments in unexpected directions; type was set on board of North River steamboats by corps of printers, who had a speech ready for the press in New York soon after its delivery in Albany; carrier pigeons, carefully trained, flew from Halifax or Boston with the latest news from Europe tucked under their wings, and delivered their charge to their trainer in his room near Wall Street; an adventurous person, known at the time by the mysterious title of "the man in the glazed cap," made a voyage across the Atlantic in a common pilot boat twenty years ago, secretly and with only three or four companions, in the interest of two or three journals which determined to "beat" the others in their arrangements for obtaining early news from abroad.

Charles H. Levermore twenty years ago expressed regret in the *American Historical Review* that the revolution in journalism had been wrought by the unprincipled Bennett, and not by a man of such education, taste, and high-mindedness as Bryant, whose name would assure the standards of his newspaper. The best journalist and worst editor in the country, Parton called Bennett, deploring the fact that during the Civil War neither the *Times*, *Tribune* nor *World* could reduce the "bad, good *Herald*," which Lincoln read, to a second rank. Parke Godwin, writing upon Bennett's death in 1872 in the *Evening Post*, refused him the title of a great journalist even, stating that he was a great news-vender. "What he said from day to day was said merely to produce a sensation, to raise a laugh, or to confirm a vulgar prejudice; and so far as he had any influence at all as a writer, it was one that debased and corrupted the community in which his paper was read. He did more to vulgarize the tone of the press in this country than any man ever before connected with it; and the worst caricatures that the genius of Balzac, Dickens, and Thackeray has given us of the low, slang-whanging, dissolute, and unprincipled Bohemian, of the Lousteaus, Jefferson Bricks, and Capt. Shandons of the journalistic profession, fail to depict what Bennett actually was." But his journal was read as no other had been. Men concealed it when they saw a

friend approaching it, but they bought it and examined every column.

Bryant had neither the necessary inclinations nor aptitudes to accomplish such a revolution. When he started home from Germany he left his family there, meaning soon to return. Upon learning how straitened was the condition of the *Evening Post*, he became temporarily disheartened. Within two months he wrote Dana that he earnestly hoped that "the day will come when I may retire without danger of starving, and give myself to occupations that I like better." Near the end of the year he informed his brother John in Illinois that he thought of removing thither with $3,000-$5,000 for a new home. The best journalist is not made from a man who is thus lukewarm in his work. Moreover, even had Bryant thrown himself heart and soul into his calling, his literary tastes, his retiring temper, his keen sense of dignity, his fame as a poet, would have prevented his breaking new ground as Bennett did. He had no equal before Greeley, and no superior later, in writing editorials, and he made the intellectual influence of the *Evening Post* one of the strongest in the nation. He was a great editor. But he could not have gone down into the busy 'Change with his pencil as Bennett did; he could not have attended meetings, visited theaters, and mingled with common men in offices and on street corners, with Bennett's constancy of purpose.

The *Evening Post* had as much news as some sixpenny rivals, but it sadly needed the *Herald's* stimulus. Its reports of the great fire of 1835 were partly original, partly taken from the *Express*. When the Astor House was opened the following summer, an exciting event, it clipped its report from the *Daily Advertiser*—and even the latter had but one meager paragraph. Probably the most striking instance of its deficiency occurred in December, 1829, the month that Chancellor Lansing disappeared from the city streets—the greatest mystery of the kind in New York political history. The *Post's* only account was left by Lansing's friends:

Notice.—On Saturday evening, the 12th instant, Chancellor Lansing, of Albany, arrived in this city, and put up at the City Hotel; he breakfasted and dined there. Shortly after dinner he retired to his room and wrote for a short time, and about the hour that the persons intending to go to Albany usually leave the Hotel, he was observed to leave his room. He has not been seen or heard of since that time. He left his trunk, cane, etc., in his room. His friends in this city have heard this morning from Albany that he has not returned home.

It is supposed that he had written a letter to Albany and that he had intended to put it on board the steamboat that left here for that place at five o'clock that afternoon. He had made an engagement to take tea at six o'clock that evening with Mr. Robert Ray, of this city, who resides at No. 29 Marketfield Street.

He was dressed in black, and wore powder in his hair. He was a man of a large and muscular frame of body, and about five feet nine inches in height. He was upwards of seventy-six years of age. He was in good health, and has never been known to have been affected by any mental aberration. Any intelligence concerning him will be most gratefully acknowledged by his afflicted friends and family, if left for them, at the bar of the City Hotel.

No effort whatever was made to push an inquiry into this mystery, which a generation later would have made the press ring for weeks.

III

Bryant resumed his editorial chair in the Pine Street office on Feb. 16, 1836, and set heroically to work to restore the *Evening Post*. The net profits that year fell to $5,671.15, and in the panic year following to $3,242.76. Leggett was only slowly convalescing at his New Rochelle home, and the editor was assisted by Mason till the end of May, when he obtained the services of Henry J. Anderson, professor of mathematics at Columbia. He took a large furnished room on Fourth Street, and was accustomed to be in his office at seven o'clock in the morning. There was no money to hire many helpers, and until 1840 three men did practically all the writing. Bryant wrote the editorials and literary notices; his chief assistant, first Anderson and then Parke God-

win, clipped exchanges, furnished dramatic criticism, and contributed short editorial paragraphs; and another man acted as general reporter. Ship news was gathered by pilots in the common employ of the evening papers.

Yet in this moment of adversity occurred one of those displays of liberalism and enlightened judgment which are the special glory of the *Evening Post*. After Leggett's illness, Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., had written an editorial (Nov. 14, 1835) arguing against the attitude of condemnation which nearly all employers then took toward labor unions, which were just beginning to find imperfect shape. He affirmed that the whole body social was interested in promoting the objects of these unions—in diminishing the hours of labor and increasing the wages of the mechanics. The laboring masses, under the principle of universal suffrage, held the government in their hands, and would exercise their power wisely only if they had education and prosperity. This was not the case: "compelled to labor the extremest amount that nature can endure, and receiving for that excessive labor a compensation which makes year after year of excessive toil necessary to obtain independence, what leisure have they to devote to the acquisition of . . . knowledge . . . ?" Bryant felt precisely as Leggett and Sedgwick did on this subject. At the end of May, 1836, twenty-one journeymen tailors who had formed a union were indicted for a conspiracy injurious to trade and commerce, and after a three days' trial in the court of Oyer and Terminer, Judge Edwards charged the jury to find them guilty. Bryant immediately (May 31) attacked him:

> We do not admit, until we have further examined the question, that the law is as laid down by the Judge; but if it be, the sooner such a tyrannical and wicked law is abrogated the better. His doctrine has, it is true, a decision of the Supreme Court in its favor; but the reasoning by which he attempts to show the propriety of that decision is of the weakest possible texture. The idea that arrangements and combinations for certain rates of wages are injurious to trade and commerce, is as absurd as the

idea that the current prices of the markets, which are always the result of understandings and combinations, are injurious.

The next day the tailors were heavily fined. The *Evening Post,* declaring this monstrous, showed its wicked absurdity in a series of clear expositions. It had been made criminal for the working classes to settle among themselves the price of their own property! According to Judge Edwards, the owners of the packets, who had agreed upon $140 as the standard fare to Liverpool, were criminals; so were the editors, who had agreed upon $10 for a yearly subscription; so were the butchers and bakers. The very price current was evidence of conspiracy. Bryant recalled the fact that in England the Tories themselves had expunged the laws against labor unions from the statute books twelve years before. "Can anything be imagined more abhorrent to every sentiment of generosity and justice, than the law which arms the rich with the legal right to fix, by assize, the wages of the poor? If this is not slavery, we have forgotten its definition. Strike the right of associating for the sale of labor from the privileges of a freeman, and you may as well bind him to a master, or ascribe him to the soil."

Other newspapers, of which the *Journal of Commerce* and the *American* were the most prominent, took the side of Judge Edwards. For a time the excitement was intense. A mass-meeting of mechanics, which the *Evening Post* declared the largest ever seen in the city, was held in City Hall Park on the evening of June 13; and Bryant continued his editorials at intervals for a month.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RISE OF THE SLAVERY QUESTION; THE MEXICAN WAR

BRYANT'S real editorial career dates from 1836, for all that had preceded was mere preparation. He quickly mastered his first discouragement, and throwing aside the idea of becoming an Illinois farmer or lawyer, devoted himself to the *Evening Post* as the work, poetry apart, of his life. We catch a new and determined note in his letters by 1837, when he was laboring like a born journalist at his desk from seven to four daily, and, says his assistant, was so impatient of interruption that he often seemed irascible. He was so fully occupied, he wrote Dana in February, "that if there is anything of the Pegasus in me, I am too much exhausted to use my wings." In an unpublished note to his wife, who had returned in the fall of 1836, he declared: "I have enough to do, both with the business part of the paper and the management of it as editor, to keep me constantly busy. I must see that the *Evening Post* does not suffer by these hard times, and I must take that part in the great controversies now going on which is expected of it."

He still longed for literary leisure. But he courageously stuck to his post, writing Dana in June, 1838, that his editorial labors were as heavy as he could endure with a proper regard to his health, and that he managed to maintain his strength only by the greatest simplicity of diet, renouncing tea, coffee, and animal food, and by frequent walks of a half day to two days in the country. By this date, he said, he could look back rejoicing that he had never yielded to the temptation of giving up the newspaper.

Leggett did not return. He had borrowed so much of Mrs. Coleman's part of the dividend in the last year of his connection with the paper that she compelled him,

by legal steps, to surrender his third share of the *Evening Post* to her; and Bryant would not give him that freedom for vehement writing which he wished. In December, 1836, he established the *Plaindealer,* a short-lived weekly to which the *Evening Post* made many complimentary references. But his health continued bad, and on May 29, 1839, just after President Van Buren had offered him the post of confidential agent in Central America in the belief that a sea voyage would benefit him, he died.

His place was supplied in part by chance. During the summer of 1836 Parke Godwin, a briefless barrister of only twenty, a graduate of Princeton, was compelled to remove to a cheaper boarding-house, and went to one at 316 Fourth Street, kept by a native of Great Barrington, Mass. He was introduced one evening to a newcomer, a middle-aged man of medium height, spare figure, and clean-shaven, severe face. His gentle manner, pure English, and musical voice were as distinctive as his large head and bright eyes. "A certain air of abstractedness made you set him down as a scholar whose thoughts were wandering away to his books; and yet the deep lines about his mouth told of struggle either with himself or with the world. No one would have supposed that there was any fun in him, but, when a lively turn was given to some remark, the upper part of his face, particularly the eyes, gleamed with a singular radiance, and a short, quick, staccato, but hearty laugh acknowledged the humorous perception." On public affairs this stranger spoke with keen insight and great decision. That evening Godwin was told that he was the poet Bryant. For some months, till after Mrs. Bryant's return, the two were thrown much together, without increasing their acquaintance. Bryant's greeting to strangers was chilly, he never prolonged a conversation, he was fond of solitary walks, and he spent his evenings alone in his room. Godwin was therefore much surprised when one day the editor remarked: "My assistant, Mr. Ulshoeffer, is going to Cuba for his health; how would you like to take his place?" The young lawyer, after demurring that he had

had no experience, went to try it—and stayed, with intermissions, more than forty years.

"Every editorial of Bryant's opens with a stale joke and closes with a fresh lie," growled a Whig in these years. It was part of the change from Leggett's slashing directness to Bryant's suavity that the latter prefaced most political articles with an apposite illustration drawn from his wide reading. When the Albany *Journal,* Thurlow Weed's newspaper, was arguing the self-evident proposition that the State should not buy the Ithaca & Oswego Railway, he told the story of the perspiring attorney who was interrupted by the judge in a long harangue: "Brother Plowden, why do you labor so? The Court is with you." The effrontery of a Whig politician caught in a bit of rascality inspired an editorial which opened with the grave plea of a thievish Indian at the bar: "Yes, I stole the powder horn, but it is white man's law that you must prove it." Again, with more dignity, Bryant began an article on the Bank with a reference to Virgil's episode of Nisus and Euryalus.

In 1839 Webster's friends professed great indignation because the orator had been called a "myrmidon." The myrmidons, Bryant remarked, were soldiers who fought under Achilles at Troy, and the opprobrium of being called one was much that of being called a hussar or lancer. The wrath of Webster's defenders seemed to him like Dame Quickly's:

> Falstaff: "Go to, you are a woman, go."
> Hostess: "Who, I? I defy thee, I was never called so in mine own house before."

But, he added, there was one important difference between Webster and a myrmidon. He had never heard of the high-tariff friends of a myrmidon making up a purse of $65,000 for services well done. Bryant was always master of a grave humor. When another journal assailed him, he wrote: "There is an honest shoemaker living on the Mergellina, at Naples, on the right hand as you

go towards Pozzioli, whose little dog comes out every morning and barks at Vesuvius."

Bryant had need of this persuasive tact, for in 1836 the following of the *Evening Post* consisted chiefly of workmen, who could not buy it, and of the young enthusiasts who polled a city vote of only 2,712 that fall for the Loco-Foco ticket. The policy was not changed. The paper continued to attack special banking incorporations, and in 1838 had the satisfaction of seeing a general State banking law passed. It kept up its fire against the judicial doctrine that trade unions were conspiracies against trade, and saw it rapidly disintegrate and vanish. During 1837 it was able to point to the panic as an exact fulfillment of its predictions. By 1840 it was clear that it had said not a word too much when it attacked the craze for State internal improvements as not only making for political corruption and favoritism between localities, but as leading to financial ruin. Gov. Seward that year declared that New York had been misled into a number of impractical and profitless projects, Gov. Grayson of Maryland called for heavy direct taxes as the only means of averting disgraceful bankruptcy, and Gov. Porter, of Pennsylvania, said that his State had been loaded with a multitude of undertakings that it could neither prosecute, sell, nor abandon. This proved its old contention, said the *Post,* that "the moment we admit that the Legislature may engage in local enterprises, it is beset at once by swarms of schemers." In 1837 Bryant asked for the repeal of the usury laws, but in this he was not years, but generations, ahead of his time.

As a personal friend of Van Buren, Bryant had been among the first to applaud the movement for his nomination, and he warmly championed him throughout the campaign of 1836. At the South the *Evening Post* was for some time declared to be Little Van's chosen organ for addressing the public, much to the President's embarrassment; for the *Post's* views on the growing anti-slavery movement were not his. Van Buren's greatest

measure, the sub-treasury plan, was stubbornly opposed by the bankers and most other representatives of capital in New York. It ended the distribution of national moneys among the State banks, where Federal funds had been kept since 1833, and it was a terrible blow to them. The *Evening Post* had consistently stood for a divorce of the government and the banks, and it supported the sub-treasury scheme through all its vicissitudes. It had always opposed the division of the surplus revenue among the States, and in applauding Van Buren's determination to stop it the paper again aroused the wrath of the business community in New York. But upon certain other issues it crossed swords with the President.

II

Bryant, like Ellery Channing, J. Q. Adams, Whittier, Wendell Phillips, and Salmon P. Chase, took up the fight for free speech and found that it rapidly led him into the battle for free soil. In January, 1836, Ex-President Adams began in the House of Representatives his heroic contest with the Southerners for the unchecked reception of abolitionist petitions there, and in May the "gag" resolution against these petitions was passed. Bryant's indignation was scorching. He wrote upon the speech of a New York Senator (April 21):

> Mr. Tallmadge has done well in vindicating the right of individuals to address Congress on any matter within its province. . . . This is something, at a time when the Governor of one State demands of another that free discussion on a particular subject shall be made a crime by law, and when a Senator of the Republic, and a pretended champion of liberty, rises in his place and proposes a censorship of the press more servile, more tyrannical, more arbitrary, than subsists in any other country. It is a prudent counsel also that Mr. Tallmadge gives to the South—to beware of increasing the zeal, of swelling the ranks and multiplying the friends, of the Abolitionists by attempting to exclude them from the common rights of citizens. . . . Yet it seems to us that Mr. Tallmadge . . . might have gone a little further. It seems to us that . . . he should have protested with somewhat

more energy and zeal against the attempt to shackle the expression of opinion. It is no time to use honeyed words when the liberty of speech is endangered. . . . If the tyrannical doctrines and measures of Mr. Calhoun can be carried into effect, there is an end to liberty in this country; but carried into effect they cannot be. It is too late an age to copy the policy of Henry VIII; we lie too far in the occident to imitate the despotic rule of Austria. The spirit of our people has been too long accustomed to freedom to bear the restraint which is sought to be put upon it. Discussion will be like the Greek fire, which blazed the fiercer for the water thrown upon it; and if the stake be set and the faggots ready, there will be candidates for martyrdom.

When in August of this year a meeting in Cincinnati resolved to silence J. G. Birney's abolitionist press by violence, the *Evening Post* used similar words. No tyranny in any part of the world was more absolute or frightful than such mob tyranny. "So far as we are concerned, we are resolved that this despotism shall neither be submitted to nor encouraged. . . . We are resolved that the subject of slavery shall be, as it ever has been, as free a subject for discussion, and argument, and declamation, as the difference between whiggism and democracy, or the difference between Arminians and Calvinists." This was at a time when the right of Abolitionists to continue their agitation was denied from some of the most influential New York pulpits, when the great majority of citizens had no tolerance for them, and when newspapers like Bennett's *Herald* and Hallock's *Journal of Commerce*, both pro-slavery, gave them nothing but contempt and denunciation. When Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered at Alton, Ill., by a mob, there were influential New Yorkers who believed that he had received his deserts, but Bryant cried out in horror. Without free tongues and free pens, the nation would fall into despotism or anarchy. "We approve, then, we applaud—we would consecrate, if we could, to universal honor—the conduct of those who bled in this gallant defense of the freedom of the press. Whether they erred or not in their opinions, they did not err in the conviction of their right, as citi-

zens of a democratic State, to express them; nor did they err in defending their rights with an obstinacy which yielded only to death."

Before 1840 Bryant had enrolled himself among those who held that the spread of slavery must be stopped. President Van Buren had pledged himself to veto any bill for emancipating the slaves in the District of Columbia. Although the plan of freeing the District slaves was abominated by most people in New York city, and even J. Q. Adams would not vote in favor of it in 1836, the *Evening Post* attacked and derided Van Buren's pledge. When this reform was included in the Compromise of 1850, it boasted that New Yorkers had been converted to an advocacy of it as overwhelming as their opposition a dozen years earlier. During 1839 a considerable stir was produced in the city by the *Armistad* affair. A number of Africans sold as slaves in Cuba being transported from Havana to Principe on the schooner *Armistad,* rose, took possession of the craft, and compelled those of the crew whom they had not killed to steer the vessel, as they believed, to Africa. It was brought into Long Island Sound instead, and the negroes were seized as criminals. Bryant asked his friend Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., to investigate the law, and the latter came to the conclusion, which he expounded at length in the *Evening Post,* that the blacks could not be held. They had gained their freedom, he said, and were heroes and not malefactors. Secretary of State Forsythe and Attorney-General Grundy did all they could to vindicate the claim of the Spanish Minister to the negroes, but the courts upheld Sedgwick's view of the issue, and they were liberated.

Every conscientious Democratic journal of the North was faced by a common embarrassment in the decade 1840-1850, when a dominance over the Democratic party was steadily established by advocates of the extension of slavery. If, like the *Herald* or *Journal of Commerce* or *Express,* they were friendly to the South in defiance of conscience, they felt no difficulty. But the *Evening Post* believed slavery a curse. What could it do when Polk

was nominated in 1844 by its own party upon a platform favorable to this vicious institution, and when the Democratic leaders carried the nation into the Mexican War with the effect, if not the calculated purpose, of adding to the slaveowners' domain? Bryant did not wish to abandon the great party which stood for low tariff, opposition to the squandering of public money on internal improvements, and a decisive separation between the government and banking. He could only do in 1844 what Greeley and the *Tribune* did in 1848, when Taylor, whom the *Tribune* distrusted, was nominated by the Whigs; stick to his party, reconcile his feelings as best he could with his party allegiance, and labor to improve the party from within.

The picturesque log-cabin campaign of 1840 offered no perplexities to the *Evening Post*. It still looked upon President Van Buren with satisfaction, and wished him reëlected. Like its opponent the *Tribune*, it was glad that Harrison had beaten Henry Clay for the Whig nomination, but that was in no degree because it respected Harrison. It regarded the retired farmer and Indian fighter of North Bend, Ohio, as all Democratic organs regarded him, a nonentity. What title had this feeble villager of nearly seventy, whose last public office had been the clerkship of a county court, to the Presidency? No one has ever thought Harrison a great statesman, and any undue severity on the part of the *Evening Post* may be attributed to the warmth of the campaign. It called him "a silly and conceited old man whose irregularities of life have enfeebled his originally feeble faculties, and who is as helpless in the hands of his party as the idols of a savage tribe we have somewhere read of, who are flogged when they do not listen to the prayers of their people for rain." At the beginning of March it declared that Harrison might be elected, but that the most sinister figure in his party would direct his policies; "Harrison may be the nominal chief magistrate, but Clay will be the Charles Martel, the Mayor of the Palace."

The hard-cider, coonskin-cap, log-cabin enthusiasm sickened the *Evening Post*. The plan, commented Bryant on the Harrison songs, "is to cut us to pieces with A sharp, to lay us prostrate with G flat, to hunt us down with fugues, overrun us with choruses, and bring in Harrison with a grand diapason." "The accomplishment of drinking hard cider, possessed by one of the candidates for the Presidency," he later wrote, was the safest the Whigs could urge. "If they were to talk now of his talents, of his opinions, of his public virtues, and of the other qualifications which are commonly supposed to fit a citizen of our republic for the office of its chief magistrate, they would find themselves much embarrassed." The Whigs, counting upon the reflex of the panic of 1837, and the unpopularity of Van Buren, to elect Harrison, had taken care to commit themselves to no platform. The *Evening Post* therefore attributed to them all the evil policies they had ever espoused. Was it worth while to shoulder the burden of a high tariff and a costly internal improvement system, to restore the corrupt union of bank and state, to pay the enormous State debts out of the national treasury, and to strengthen Federal power at the expense of the States, all for the sake of having a President who quaffed hard cider?

During the campaign it was hinted by the *Evening Post* that if chosen, Harrison could not live to the end of his official term. It recorded the fact that when he arrived in Washington, the fatigue of receiving his friends was "so great that he was obliged to forego the usual ceremony of shaking hands with them." A month later the paper was commenting upon the ghastly contrast between the festivities, pageants, and congratulations which attended his inauguration, and the solemnity and gloom as the plumed hearse carried his body, behind six white horses, to the Congressional burying ground. Because Bryant refused to write panegryrically of the dead President, though he did write respectfully, and because he refrained from using heavy black column rules for mourning, a practice which he called "typographical

foppery," he was violently assailed by the Whig press as a "vampire" and "ghoul."

Bryant and Parke Godwin naturally hoped for the renomination of Van Buren in 1844, believing that the battle unfairly won by the Whigs in 1840 ought to be fought again on the same field, and with the same well-tried Democratic leader. Bryant told the story of the Santa Fé hunter who used to pat his rifle, carried for forty years, saying: "I believe in it. I know that whenever I fire there is meat." In midsummer of 1843 he was confident that victory was already assured, the political reaction since 1841 being "without a parallel in the history of the peaceful conduct of affairs in this country." The *Evening Post* welcomed the "black tariff" of 1842, the work of the Whig protectionists, as contributing magnificently to this reaction. It was like an overdose of poison; instead of accomplishing its purpose, it would act as an emetic and be rejected at once. But between that date and Polk's nomination in May, 1844, there arose the questions of Texas and slavery, offering all editors of Bryant's views the most distressing dilemma.

From a very early date the *Evening Post* had opposed the annexation of Texas, except under circumstances that would fully satisfy Mexico on one hand, and free soil sentiment on the other. On June 17, 1836, when Texas had just declared its freedom, Bryant asserted that if the United States, under the circumstances, even acknowledged Texan independence, "our government would lose its character for justice and magnanimity with the whole world, and would deserve to be classed with those spoilers of nations whose example we are taught as republicans to detest." He frequently spoke with satisfaction of the growth of the little republic, noting in 1843 that it had 80,000 people. But when it became evident early the next year that President Tyler was determined to effect its annexation, the newspaper was alarmed. The first rumor that Secretary of State Calhoun had negotiated a secret treaty with Texas, reaching New York in March, threw it into a fever of indignation. Its chief apprehen-

sion arose from the fact that the treaty was said to permit slavery in all parts of the new territory save a small corner to which it was uncertain the United States would have any title. This led the *Evening Post* to call the project "unjust, impolitic, and hostile to the freedom of the human race."

The actual treaty, sent to the Senate on April 22 by President Tyler, was assailed with a variety of arguments, but the *Evening Post* harped chiefly upon the anti-slavery objection. It would inevitably involve the United States in war with Mexico, and cost a huge sum in men and money. The Senate having been elected at a time when no one was thinking of the Texan question, it would be wicked to decide so important an issue affirmatively; there must be some form of national referendum. But above all, the treaty was evil because it would increase the slave population of the nation and bulwark this monstrous Southern institution. It would "keep alive a war more formidable than any to which we are exposed from Great Britain or any other foreign power—we mean the dissensions between the northern and southern regions of the Union. The cause of these dissensions, if the territory of the republic be not enlarged, is gradually losing strength and visibly tending to its extinction, but by the admission of Texas it will be reinforced and perpetuated." Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., writing under the pen-name "Veto," was hurriedly impressed into service for a series of articles—admirable articles, too.

The treaty was defeated in the Senate; and then ensued the Presidential campaign of 1844, hinging upon it—the first campaign directly to involve the slavery question.

When the Democratic Convention met at Baltimore on May 27, 1844, it was the fervent hope of the *Evening Post* and whole northern wing of the party that it would nominate Van Buren. He had publicly declared against immediate annexation of Texas, asserting that it would look like territory-grabbing and intimating that, as the *Post* had repeatedly said, colossal jobbery by land-speculators was involved. The South was determined that he

should not be named. The balloting for a nominee was therefore a decision whether Democracy should stand for or against the extension of slave territory; and because the Southerners were the more aggressive, they won. Van Buren was defeated by the revival of a rule requiring a two-thirds majority, his vote steadily declining, and Polk, a comparatively unknown slave-holder, was named. On May 8 Bryant had said editorially that "the party cannot be rallied, however the politicians may exert themselves," in favor of an annexationist Southerner. He repeated this warning regarding the candidate on the eve of the convention; "if he declares himself for the annexation of Texas, he will encounter the determined opposition" of the North. It was with unconcealed dismay that the *Evening Post* chronicled Polk's nomination. He was a man of handsome talents, manly character, and many sound views, it said, "but like most Southern politicians, is deplorably wrong on the Texas question."

Should the *Evening Post* bolt? For a time Bryant considered doing so. But it simply could not accept Clay, the Whig candidate; and admitting that "the fiery and imperious South overrides and silences the North in matters of opinion," Bryant prepared to make the best of a wretched situation. He explained his stand by saying that on the one hand, he could not possibly assist Clay to win the Presidency and restore the United States Bank; on the other, he did not believe annexation inevitable under Polk. The Democratic platform had declared for annexation "at the earliest practicable moment"; and by emphasizing the word "practicable," and arguing that it involved all kinds of delays, and the establishment of national good faith precedent to the step, the newspaper tried to argue that it was at least distant.

Bryant's position was made more tenable when, midway in the campaign, Clay wrote his famous and fatal "Raleigh letter," in which he said that if annexation could be accomplished without dishonor, war, or injustice, he would be glad to see it. This meant, as thousands of

Whigs felt when they stayed from the polls on election day, that there was perhaps little to choose between the candidates.

Yet the *Post* never quite surrendered its independence, and tried throughout the summer to lead a movement within the party for a proper solution of the Texas question. There were enemies to annexation in Texas itself, it believed; there were enemies throughout the South, even in South Carolina, and the initial enthusiasm for it was beginning to cool. If the Northern Democrats asserted themselves forcibly against it as a party measure, "the day of this scheme, we are fully assured, will soon be over." In pursuance of this policy, Bryant, Theodore Sedgwick, David Dudley Field, and three other New Yorkers drew up a confidential circular to a number of Democrats of like views, proposing a joint manifesto in opposition to annexation, and a concerted effort to elect anti-annexationist Congressmen. This manifesto appeared in the *Evening Post* of Aug. 20, and made a considerable impression in New York. But such efforts were in vain. Polk's election made the entrance of Texas into the Union a certainty, and it was indeed authorized by a joint resolution of Congress the day before he took office. Bryant must have questioned that March whether his newspaper, which had so decisively lost its fight, should not have taken the side of the hated Clay.

The final protests against annexation did not commit the *Post* to any opposition to the Mexican War. That conflict did not begin for more than two years, until April, 1846; and the events of the interim convinced Bryant that Mexico rather than America was responsible for it. Polk acted pacifically, and the poet's friend, Bancroft, then Secretary of the Navy, wrote him that "we were driven reluctantly to war." Mexico had, the *Evening Post* believed, committed numberless aggressions upon American interests, while after severing diplomatic relations, she would not renew them except on impossible terms. The journal affirmed its belief (May 13, 1846) in "the inconsistency of a war of invasion and conquest

with the character of our government and the ends for which Providence has manifestly raised up our republic." It said then and when peace had come that the nation would yet hold to a fearful responsibility the Southerners who had precipitated the annexation and the war for the perpetuation of slavery. But it did not think that the weak and violent Mexican government had a right to the perpetual allegiance of Texans, or to menace our territory after the annexation. Whereas every one of sense had opposed a war with England over the Oregon question, Bryant wrote, only one or two newspapers were attacking this collision. Writing that "we approve of such demonstrations of vigor as shall convince Mexico that we are in earnest," the editor favored a resolute prosecution of the struggle.

III

While the *Evening Post* was establishing a militant free-soil position, its news features were improving. The office force remained pitifully small. In addition to Bryant, his assistant, Parke Godwin, and a reporter, at the end of 1843 room was made for a commercial editor, who supplied information on the markets, wrote upon business affairs, and supervised the marine intelligence; these four made up the staff. The paper was enlarged in 1840, going from seven columns to eight and lengthening its page, while in 1842 commenced the issuance of a weekly *Evening Post,* in addition to the semi-weekly—a profitable innovation. It was wonderful that so few men could do so much. In the fact that they did we have the explanation of a little note Mrs. Bryant wrote to Mrs. William Ware, wife of the author of "Zenobia," in the late thirties: "Mr. Bryant has gone to his office. You cannot think how distressed I am about his working so hard. He gets up as soon as it is light, takes a mouthful to eat,—it cannot be called a breakfast, for it is often only what the Germans call a 'stick of bread'; occasionally the milkman comes in season for him to get some bread and milk. As yet, his health is good, but I fear that his

constitution is not strong enough for such intense labor." Occasionally a little help was lent by outsiders—James K. Paulding as well as Sedgwick contributed editorials early in the forties; but it was little.

Year by year the local news improved. Bryant had at first objected to reports of criminal cases on moral grounds, but he now took the sensible view that to have the light let in upon evil assisted in combating it. As early as 1836 he had the famous murder of Helen Jewett covered in detail. Another of his early prejudices was against the reporting of lectures by which many literary men of the day made part of their living, on the ground that if the report was faithful, it tended to prevent a repetition of the lecture, but even while he voiced this opinion, in 1841, he was giving a comprehensive summary of Emerson's addresses. Beginning in 1845, the *Evening Post* published a daily column with the heading, "City Intelligence," which was often a queer mélange of news and editorial comment, for it discussed urgent municipal needs—the improvement of the Tombs, the adoption of mechanical street sweepers, the substitution of a paid fire department for the volunteer system, and so on. The headings for a typical Monday in 1848 run thus:

Confusion Among the Judges (Six courts met at 10 a. m., at City Hall, with only four rooms among them).

Foul Affair at Sea (The brig Colonel Taylor arrives, and reports that its mate at sea threw a sailor overboard).

Removal of the Telegraph Offices (Albany and Buffalo Company removes to 16 Wall Street).

Case of Mme. Restel (Developments in a murder case).

Fires—A Child Burnt to Death (The week-end conflagrations totalled eleven, a modest list. At one in Leroy Street nine houses had been burnt; at one in Thirteenth Street a child and six horses had been killed).

City Statistics (The last year saw 1,823 new buildings erected; the city had 327 licensed omnibuses, 3,780 taverns and saloons, 168 junkshops, and 681 charcoal peddlers).

And so the column continued through police news,

theater puffs, and notices of academy commencements, until it ended just above an advertisement of Sands's Sarsaparilla and the Balsam of Wild Cherry, glowingly recommended by testimonials.

But the chief improvement in the news was wrought by special correspondence, which early in the forties attained a surprising extent and finish. By various means, including advertising for correspondents, Bryant built up a staff of contributors that covered every part of the nation. In 1841-2 each week during the sessions of Congress brought letters from two men, "Z" and "Very," while during the legislative session there were two Albany correspondents, "L" and "Publius." Every important State capital north of Richmond had its contributor. In the first week of 1842, for example, appeared letters from Springfield, Ill., Providence, R. I., and Detroit, Mich. A Paris correspondent wrote regularly over the initials "A. V.," and a London correspondent signed much more frequent articles "O. P. Q."

This London correspondence ran to great length. Into one typical article, printed on March 14, 1842, "O. P. Q." crowded an account of the royal christening, at which the future Edward VII "was got back to the Castle without squalling"; the Dublin elections; Macready's experiment at Drury Lane Theater, where for the first time the pit seats had been "provided with backs, and, together with the boxes, numbered, and a ticket given to the occupant, who thus keeps his seat throughout the evening"; of Adelaide Kemble's singing at Covent Garden; of Douglas Jerrold's new comedy, "Prisoners of War"; and of the new books, including Mrs. Trollope's "Blue Belles of England"; the whole concluding with some gossip about a ruler in whom Americans were more interested than in President Tyler:

> It is said that the Queen still continues staunch Whig; that she is civil, but laconic, to the Tories; and that pleasant old Lord Melbourne's easy chair, in which he used to take his after-dinner nap when he dined at the palace, is still kept for his use alone, being

wheeled out of the closet when he dines there, and wheeled back when he takes his departure.

Her majesty and her husband appear to go on as comfortably as if they lived in a cottage (ornée) untroubled with crowns and royal christenings. Prince Albert is a good deal liked for the sensible and unassuming manner in which he has heretofore conducted himself. At the Mayor's dinner, the other day, he said he began to feel himself "quite at home." One of the papers remarks: "Of course he does; what respectable man, living two years in the most comfortable house, with a charming young wife, a rising family, good shooting, and the general esteem, could feel otherwise than at home?"

The most striking feature in newspaper correspondence of the forties was the prominence given mere travel. Americans were more curious about their expanding and fast-filling land than now, and the expense and hardship of travel made its vicarious enjoyment greater. Two midsummer months in 1843 afford a representative view of this side of the newspaper. Bryant concluded his correspondence written during a trip to South Carolina and Florida, describing Charleston Harbor, a plantation corn-shucking, negro songs, alligators, tobacco-chewing, and the reminders of the Seminole War. From another corner of the Union an unsigned letter of 3,000 words described an interesting trip through wilder Michigan. Bryant, returning north, contributed from Keene, N. H., and Addison County, Vt., a description of scenery in those two States. From Columbus, O., some one wrote of his journey thither by way of the Great Lakes. In August a correspondent at Saratoga waxed loquacious. He narrated some incidents he had observed of J. Q. Adams's tour in upper New York; pictured Martin Van Buren sojourning at the Springs, "as round, plump, and happy as a partridge," and said to be looking for a wife; and sketched N. P. Willis, at a ball there, "surrounded by bevies of literary loungers and dilettanti, who look up to him with equal respect for the fashionable cut of his coat and the exceeding gracefulness of his writings."

Bryant wrote letters from all his foreign tours—those of 1834-6, 1845-6, 1849, 1852-3, and 1857-8; while

others of the staff who traveled did the same. In 1834 the *Evening Post* published a series of letters from South American ports, written anonymously by a naval officer on an American warship; while for twenty years regular correspondence was furnished by a resident of Buenos Aires. When Commodore Biddle sailed into Yeddo Bay the summer of 1846 to try to establish treaty relations with Japan, an officer of his squadron sent the *Post* a highly interesting account of their chill reception. The vessels were surrounded with hundreds of armed boats from the day their arrival produced consternation upon land; they had been supplied with water, wood, poultry, and vegetables, free; but the authorities had peremptorily refused any further intercourse. Two years later both the Paris and Berlin correspondents wrote vivid descriptions of the revolutionary uprisings of that year, the former being in the thick of the fighting on the Boulevards. Special correspondence in the early fifties came even from Siam. But we can best give an impression of the wealth of this mailed matter by summarizing it for a single month (August, 1850):

From Washington and Albany, continuous correspondence; from Toronto, three articles, on Dominion politics and railways; from Montreal, letter on a great fire there and sentiment toward America; from London, letters by Wm. H. Maxwell and "XYZ" on Peel's last speech, California gold fever, African trade, stock prices, corn laws, sorrow over President Taylor's death, etc.; Paris correspondence on dinner to President Louis Napoleon and shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!"; Boston, letters on Massachusetts politics and sad case of Dr. Webster, awaiting execution after having confessed his murder; New Haven, four articles on Yale Commencement, President Woolsey's oration, and a scientific convention; Chicago, the cholera, the Illinois canal, and crops; Rochester, the Erie Railroad and the "Rochester rappings"; Brattleboro and White Mountains, descriptions of summer excursions; Chester County, Pa., home life of Senator James Cooper, a hated traitor to free-soil principles; Berkshire Valley, charms of the Housatonic.

The world's first war to be thoroughly and graphically

treated in the daily newspapers was, not the Crimean War in which William H. Russell won his fame, but the Mexican War. It was George Wilkins Kendall, a Yankee from New Hampshire who had helped found the New Orleans *Picayune* nine years earlier, who made the chief individual reputation as a correspondent. Campaigning first with Gen. Zachary Taylor on the Rio Grande, and then joining Winfield Scott on the latter's dangerous and triumphant march from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, always in the thick of the fighting, once wounded, organizing a wonderfully effective combination of courier and steamboat service, Kendall gave the *Picayune* by far the best current history of a war that journalism in any land had seen. The New Orleans *Delta,* the Baltimore *Sun,* the New York *Herald,* and, at a slight remove, the *Evening Post,* followed the fighting with admirable enterprise.

News of the war came to the East through two main channels. The greater part of it was brought from the border (i. e., from Brownsville or Matamoras) or from Vera Cruz to New Orleans or Pensacola, and thence overland northward; a smaller part came in on the long Santa Fé trail to St. Louis. Thus on Christmas Day, 1846, Col. Doniphan, at the head of a force of confident Missourians, defeated a Mexican detachment in the little skirmish of Brazitos, near El Paso. A company of traders from Santa Fé brought the news into Independence, Missouri, on Feb. 15, and the local news-writer there wrote a dispatch which was printed in the St. Louis *Republic* on the 26th. The *Evening Post* copied it on March 8, long after most of Doniphan's seven wounded men had forgotten their injuries. El Paso had been captured from the Mexicans on Dec. 27, and the fact was known in New York on March 10.

The delay in obtaining the news of Buena Vista gave rise to disheartening rumors. The battle which made "Old Rough and Ready" a national idol and the next President of the United States was fought on Feb. 23, 1847, and for a month thereafter the gloomiest reports appeared

in the press. After the middle of March Washington and New York were confused and alarmed by vague dispatches from the Southwest; on March 21 President Polk received a detailed account of Taylor's perilous position, menaced by a force three times as large as his own, and New York heard of it immediately afterward. On the evening of the twenty-second the messages to Washington had "Taylor completely cut off by an overwhelming force of the enemy," but no word of fighting. The *Evening Post* of March 30 carried its first news of a definite disaster. It republished from the New Orleans *Delta* a dispatch, brought by ship, stating "that Gen. Taylor was attacked at Agua Nueva and fell back, in good order, to the vicinity of Saltillo; here he was again attacked by Santa Anna, and a sharp engagement ensued in which Gen. Taylor was victorious, continuing his retreat in good order. Gen. Taylor fell back to Monterey, where he arrived in safety." Read between the lines, this meant a humiliating defeat. Every one was prepared to credit it, and it was partly corroborated by more meager news carried in the New Orleans *Bulletin*.

Nevertheless, the *Post* uttered a shrewd caution against believing the reports. It was justified the following day when copies of the New Orleans *Mercury* arrived, dated March 23, bearing the full tidings of Taylor's victory against crushing odds. The false rumors had filtered out through Tampico and Vera Cruz; the truth was brought by army messengers to Monterey, who had to make a detour of hundreds of miles to evade Mexican guerillas. When it reached Washington it found the politicians fiercely debating who was responsible for so weakening Taylor's army as to enable Santa Anna to smash it; when it reached New York it found the people depressed and indignant; and when it got to Boston on April 1, many denounced it as an April Fool's joke.

As the war continued the dispatches came more rapidly. The Baltimore *Sun* early established an express of sixty blooded horses overland from New Orleans, and when it was in effective operation newspapers and letters

were carried over the route in six days. This made it possible to have newsboys on Broadway shouting the capture of Vera Cruz a fortnight after it occurred. As Scott pushed inland toward Mexico City, dispatches from him were retarded, for marauding Mexicans made his line of communications with the sea unsafe. Kendall used to start his express riders from the army at midnight, and he chose men who knew the country perfectly; but several were captured and others killed. Nevertheless, the *Evening Post* could publish the news of Cerro Gordo, fought on April 18, on May 7; the news of the capture of Mexico City, which occurred on Sept. 14, on Oct. 4, or less than three weeks after the event.

Three correspondents in the field furnished the *Evening Post* with letters—Lieut. Nathaniel Niles, an Illinois soldier with Gen. Taylor; "M. R." with Scott, and "B" at Matamoras. The last gave a striking history of the rapid Americanization of this Mexican town, telling how the inhabitants reaped a golden fortune and how Taylor's soldiers chafed under their enforced stay. "M. R." contributed a picture of the taking of Vera Cruz, in which he carried a rifle. But Niles was the most active and the best writer. When the New Orleans papers, with their advantage of position, tried to give all the credit of Buena Vista to the Mississippi troops (commanded by Jefferson Davis) and to the Kentuckians, Niles flatly contradicted them. The Indiana and Illinois men, he said, deserved quite as much praise. His account of the decisive moment at Buena Vista, when the attack of the Mexicans had been finally and bloodily repulsed, is worth quoting:

> At length, about three o'clock p. m., we saw the Mexican force in our rear begin to falter and retrace their steps, under the well-directed shot of our ranks of marksmen, and the artillery still pouring its iron death-bolts into their right. Their lancers, who had taken refuge behind their infantry, and there watched the progress of the fight, made one desperate charge to turn the fortunes of the day by breaking the line of Indiana and Mississippi. But the cool, steady volunteers sent them with carnage and con-

fusion to Santa Ana, on the plain above, with the report that our reserve was 5,000 strong, and filled all the ravines in our rear. The retreat of their infantry, which paused for a moment, was now hastened by the repulse of the lancers, but still under a galling fire. They marched back in excellent order. While making their toilsome and bloody way back, Santa Ana practised a ruse to which any French or English officer would have scorned to resort. He exhibited a flag of truce, and sent it across the plain to our right, where stood our generals.

When the Second Indiana, under Col. Bowles, fled from the field after the first Mexican onset upon the American left, leaving the way to Taylor's rear open, some one suggested—says Niles—a retreat. "Retreat!" exclaimed Taylor; "No; I will charge them with the bayonet." Niles reported many human incidents of the war, and dwelt upon the barbarity of the Mexicans:

They generally killed and plundered, even of their clothes, all whom the current of battle threw into their hands. We, on the contrary, saved the lives of all who threw down their arms, and relieved the wants of the wounded, even in the midst of battle. I have seen the young American volunteer, when bullets were flying around him, kneel beside a wounded Mexican and let him drink out of his canteen. In one heap of wounded Mexicans we came upon a groaning man, whom an Illinois soldier raised and gave water. We had gone only a few steps past when the soldier thus helped twisted himself upon his elbow and shot our man through the back dead; three or four volleys instantly repaid this treachery.

The first intimation of the revolution in news-gathering which occurred in the middle forties was furnished *Evening Post* readers in the issue of May 27, 1844, when the Washington correspondent told of Morse's successful experiment with the telegraph two days earlier. "What is the news in Washington?" was the question asked from Baltimore, where the Democratic National Convention was about to meet. "Van Buren stock is rising," came the answer. On May 31 the correspondent sent another brief mention of

MORSE'S TELEGRAPH.—This wonderful invention or discovery of a new means of transmitting intelligence, is in full and perfectly successful operation. Mr. Morse is the magician at the end of the line, and an assistant who does not spell with perfect correctness officiates.

There have arrived numerous telegraphic dispatches since the meeting of the Convention at Baltimore at nine o'clock this morning. By one we are informed of the nomination of Mr. George M. Dallas, of Philadelphia, for Vice-President.

All the New York newspapers, the *Herald* leading, shortly had a column of telegraphic news, and from that in the *Evening Post* we can trace the steady extension of the wires. In the early spring of 1846 communication was opened between New York and Philadelphia. When war was declared, April 24, the line to Washington was incomplete, not having been finished between Baltimore and Philadelphia, but the gap was soon closed. The fastest carriage of news between the capital and New York, 220 miles, had been that of Harrison's inaugural message, weighty with its Roman consuls and Greek generals, in eleven hours; now eleven minutes sufficed. By the middle of September, when the line to Buffalo was complete, the country had 1,200 miles of telegraph, reaching above Boston towards Portland, to Washington on the south, and to Harrisburg on the west.

During 1847 the expansion of the telegraphic system amazed all who did not stop to think how much simpler and cheaper the installation of a line was than the building of a road. By March it had reached Pittsburgh on the west, and by September, Petersburg on the south. The next month saw it in Cincinnati and Louisville, and that fall the *Evening Post* printed telegraph news of a Cincinnati flood which made 5,000 homeless. In its New Year's message the journal congratulated its readers upon such progress that "the moment a dispatch arrives at New Orleans from our armies in Mexico its contents are known on the borders of the northern lakes." The next year Florida alone of the States east of the Mississippi was untouched by it. When the President's message

opening Congress in December, 1848, was transmitted to St. Louis, the *Evening Post* remarked that "the idea of a document filling twelve entire pages of the Washington *Union* appearing in a city nearly one thousand miles from Washington, twenty-four hours after its delivery, is almost beyond belief." Christopher Pearse Cranch contributed a poem to the *Post* upon the marvel:

> The world of the Past was an infant;
> It knew not the speech of today,
> When giants sit talking from mountain to sea,
> And the cities are wizards, who say:
> The kingdom of magic is ours;
> We touch a small clicking machine,
> And the lands of the East hear the lands of the West
> With never a bar between.

Ten years after the opening of the first American telegraph line Bryant made some caustic remarks in the *Evening Post* upon "The Slow-Coach System in Europe." For many months, it transpired, the Allies in the Crimean War had possessed a continuous telegraph line from London to the battle front. It had been demonstrated that dispatches sufficient to fill two columns of the London *Times* might be sent over it in two hours; yet the French and British publics had been obliged to wait two weeks for full details of the fall of Sebastopol, simply because the Allied authorities did not organize a competent telegraphic staff.

IV

In this decade of rapid changes, 1840-1850, Bryant began to reap the fruits of his courage, persistency, tact, and industry. The hostility of the mercantile community had lessened as the Bank question receded and the correctness of the *Post's* warnings against inflation and speculation was proved by the great panic. On March 30, 1840, Bryant editorially rejoiced that "the prejudices against it, with which its enemies had labored so vehemently to poison the minds of men of business, have been gradually overcome." The pressure of advertisements

forced the enlargement of the sheet in this year. The weekly edition which it began issuing at New Year's, 1842, was the only Democratic weekly in New York, and at $2 a year rapidly obtained an extensive circulation. In competition with sixpenny evening papers like the *Journal of Commerce* and penny papers like the *Daily News*, the *Post* held its own. It took its share in all the business enterprises of the press, as when in 1849-50, at the height of the gold fever, it published a special "*Evening Post* for California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands" just before every important sailing for the Pacific. Bryant's sagacity kept the expenses low, and his ability kept the editorial page easily the best, save for Greeley's, in the city.

It was a reflection of the new *Evening Post* prosperity when Bryant wrote his brother early in 1843: "Congratulate me! There is a probability of my becoming a landholder in New York! I have made a bargain for about forty acres of solid earth at Hempstead Harbor, on the north shore of Long Island." He referred to the Roslyn homestead at which thereafter he was to spend so much of his time. Between 1839 and 1840 the gross earnings of the journal rose from $28,355.29 to $44,194.93, and they never thereafter dropped to the danger point. In 1850 it was calculated that for the preceding ten years the average annual gross receipts had been $37,360, and that the average annual dividends had been $9,776.44. Of this Bryant's share until 1848 was one-half, and thereafter two-fifths, so that he enjoyed an ample income; while towards the end of the decade the profits of the job printing office were a tidy sum.

Nor was there so much drudgery in the office as when he had first returned in 1836. Parke Godwin draws an interesting picture of the editor's life at this period. He liked to take a week of fine summer weather from the office and spend it in excursions to the Palisades, the Delaware Water Gap, the Catskills, or the Berkshires, sometimes alone, sometimes with another good walker. Bryant's appreciative descriptions of these scenes did

much to raise the public esteem of them. At the office there were many entertaining visitors. Cooper always called when he was in town, and the contrast between the novelist and the poet was striking: "Cooper, burly, brusque, and boisterous, like a bluff sailor, always bringing a breeze of quarrel with him; Mr. Bryant, shy, modest, and delicate as a woman—they seemed little fitted for friendship." Yet warm friends they were. John L. Stephens, who had won a reputation by his travels in Arabia, Nubia, and Central America, and whose books were in considerable vogue, frequently came, "a small, sharp, nervous man," and talked of his adventures. A more magnetic personality was that of Audubon, whose tall, athletic figure, Indian-bronzed face, bright eyes, eagle nose, and long white hair attracted the eyes of every worker. He, too, loved to tell of his exploits in the wilds, and his experiences in the salons of Europe. Bancroft, who liked Bryant's Jacksonian zeal as much as he did his poetry, and William Gilmore Simms, author of "The Yemassee," occasionally paid a visit, while Godwin believed he remembered seeing Edgar Allan Poe "once or twice, to utter nothing, but to look his reverence out of wonderful lustrous eyes."

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEW YORK BECOMES A METROPOLIS; CENTRAL PARK

TEN years before the Civil War, New York city had 515,000 people, the population having risen by more than 200,000 in the forties. The northward march of buildings had passed Twenty-third Street, and the extreme northern boundary could now be placed at Thirty-fourth, though there were many empty districts south of that line. Madison Square had just been laid out. The nineteenth and twentieth wards were added within a twelvemonth. Broadway was now more than four miles long from the Battery to the open country, and along its course as far as Bleecker Street old residences were being ripped apart in clouds of dust to make way for stores. The year 1850 was that in which the time-worn City Hotel disappeared, and in which the Astor Place Opera House was remodeled for business uses. Canal Street was extended, and Dey Street widened. Almost before men realized it the old transportation facilities had become inadequate, and in 1852-3 the Third Avenue and Sixth Avenue horse railways began to carry passengers. With the whole lower part of town engrossed by trade, with more well-to-do New Yorkers fleeing northward year by year for light and air, the city in 1852 undertook the grading of Fifth Avenue from Thirty-fourth Street to Forty-fifth. The New York which thrilled to Jenny Lind's singing and turned out a quarter of a million people to watch the military procession marking President Taylor's funeral, was a New York that had suddenly bloomed into a metropolis.

In this thriving city, larger than Buffalo to-day, there was not a single open-air recreation ground worthy of the name. Dickens had remarked in 1842 that New York's summer climate was such that it would throw a man into

a fever merely to think what the streets would be but for the daily breezes from the bay. It was a smoky city —Bryant had written in the *Evening Post* of 1832 a striking description of its unwonted brightness when the cholera stopped nearly all industry—and it was ill-cleaned. The city directories, indeed, listed nineteen parks. But a number, as Five Points Park, Duane Park, and Abingdon Square, were merely places where the street intersections were a little wider than usual. Others, like Hudson Square and Gramercy Park, were private property, and still others, like the Bowling Green, were padlocked. The whole park area was only about one hundred and seventy acres, and the grounds open to the public did not exceed one hundred acres; while the largest single park, the Battery, contained only twenty-one.

The first proposal for a large uptown park was made by Bryant in the *Evening Post,* and that journal was the sturdiest of the fighters for what eventually became Central Park. It was a bold proposal, for which public sentiment could only slowly be aroused. In Edward H. Hall's scholarly history of Central Park, published by the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society in 1911, the plan is said to have originated with Andrew J. Downing, editor of the monthly *Horticulturist,* in a letter contributed to that magazine in 1849. Charles H. Haswell, in his "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," also gives Downing the credit, saying that he merits a statue from the city. But the real originator was the poet-editor. In 1836, Parke Godwin, taking frequent rambles with him, found him emphatically expressing the opinion that the city should reserve as a park the finest area of woodland remaining there, since in a few years it would be too late. Five full years before Downing's letter, on a hot July day in 1844, Bryant made a walking trip over the middle of Manhattan to examine the adaptability of a certain large tract for park purposes. Upon his return, he wrote for the issue of July 3, 1844, his proposal, heading it "A New Park."

The city the afternoon this article appeared was

streaming out to spend the Fourth at neighboring points. Some, wrote Bryant, would go to shady retreats in the country; some would refresh themselves by excursions to the seashore on Staten Island or the river front at Hoboken. "If the public authorities, who expend so much of our money in laying out the city, would do what is in their power, they might give our vast population an extensive pleasure ground for shade and recreation in these sultry afternoons, which we might reach without going out of town." Where? He answered:

> On the road to Harlem, between Sixty-eighth Street on the south, and Seventy-seventh on the north, and extending from Third Avenue to the East River, is a tract of beautiful woodland, comprising sixty or seventy acres, thickly covered with old trees, intermingled with a variety of shrubs. The surface is varied in a very striking and picturesque manner, with craggy eminences, and hollows, and a little stream runs through the midst. The swift tides of the East River sweep its rocky shores, and the fresh breeze of the bay comes in, on every warm summer afternoon, over the restless waters. The trees are of almost every species that grows in our woods—the different varieties of ash, the birch, the beech, the linden, the mulberry, the tulip tree, and others; the azalea, the kalmia, and other flowering shrubs are in bloom here in their season, and the ground in spring is gay with flowers. There never was a finer situation for the public garden of a great city. Nothing is wanting but to cut winding paths through it, leaving the woods as they now are, and introducing here and there a jet from the Croton aqueduct, the streams from which would make their own waterfalls over the rocks, and keep the brooks running through the place always fresh and full. . . .
>
> If any of our brethren of the public press should see fit to support this project, we are ready to resign in their favor any claim to the credit of originally suggesting it.

Bryant referred to the beauty and utility of Regent's Park in London, the Alameda in Madrid, the Champs Elysées in Paris, and the Prater in Vienna. By the official plan for New York, drawn up in 1807, an area of two hundred and forty acres had been reserved between Twenty-third and Thirty-fourth Streets, and Third and Seventh Avenues, to be called the Parade; this, however,

had been reduced by degrees to the six or seven acres of Madison Square. At the beginning of the century any one had been able to walk in a half hour from his home to the open fields, but it now seemed that all Manhattan would soon be covered with brick and mortar.

The editor's proposal was not for the area now included in Central Park, and was for a comparatively small tract, though Bryant had understated its size—it contained about one hundred and sixty acres, against eight hundred and forty-three in Central Park to-day. But it would be a magnificent park compared with any then existing, and the suggestion was sufficient to open a discussion. Jones's Wood, as the tract was called, was the last remnant of the primeval forest on the East River, as wild as when the Dutch had settled on the island. It was the subject of many a tale and tradition connected with the infant days of the colony, and was reputed to have been the favorite resort of pirates who descended through Hell Gate and landed there to bury their treasure and hold their revels. The first John Jones purchased it when it was called the "Louvre Farm," in 1803, and a son by the same name succeeded him. In time it became a favorite nutting and fishing ground. Anglers would sit in the shade of its rocky bluffs and overhanging elms and cast their lines into the deep waters of the East River, while in autumn boys would wander through its recesses clubbing the branches above. "What a place of delight Jones's Wood used to be in the olden days!" exclaimed "Felix Oldboy" in the eighties.

Nor was it long until Bryant himself suggested the alternative scheme for a central park. From time to time he recurred editorially to the subject, now expatiating upon the ever-increasing need for a city breathing place, now pointing to what European cities had done. In 1845 he was in England. From London he wrote (June 24) a glowing description of the fresh and verdurous expanse of Hyde Park, St. James' Park, Kensington Gardens, and Regent's Park, and in this letter he spoke of a "central" reservation in New York:

These parks have been called the lungs of London, and so important are they regarded to the public health and the happiness of the people, that I believe a proposal to dispense with some part of their extent, and cover it with streets and houses, would be regarded in much the same manner as a proposal to hang every tenth man in London. . . .

The population of your city, increasing with such prodigious rapidity; your sultry summers, and the corrupt atmosphere generated in hot and crowded streets, make it a cause of regret that in laying out New York, no preparation was made, while it was yet practicable, for a range of parks and public gardens along the central part of the island or elsewhere, to remain perpetually for the refreshment and recreation of the citizens during the torrid heats of the warm season. There are yet unoccupied lands on the island which might, I suppose, be procured for the purpose, and which, on account of their rocky and uneven surface, might be laid out into surpassingly beautiful pleasure-grounds; but while we are discussing the subject the advancing population of the city is sweeping over them and covering them from our reach.

The *Evening Post* repeatedly pressed the park project. Its editors had the more faith in it, they said, because while New Yorkers were somewhat slow in adopting plain and homely reforms, they were likely to engage eagerly in any scheme which wore an air of magnificence. They wouldn't take the trouble to keep the streets clean, but they would spend millions to bring a river into the city through the Croton aqueduct, forty miles long. They wouldn't sweep Broadway, but they would cover Blackwell's Island with stately buildings, some of them not needed. Bryant had in this way prepared the ground when Downing, in 1849, also writing from London and using many of Bryant's arguments, published his appeal in the *Horticulturist*. Downing, like the poet, had no clear or fixed idea of the limits that should be assigned the new park. The fundamental requirements, he said, were that it should be just above the limits of building, should be spacious, and should be reserved while the land was yet easily obtainable. Downing's letter, followed in 1850 by an admirable series of articles, attracted much attention. But thanks chiefly to Bryant, the subject was

now familiar to all interested in city improvement. In 1850 Fernando Wood ran for Mayor against Ambrose C. Kingsland, and both warmly advocated the establishment of a park. Kingsland, who was supported by the *Evening Post,* was elected, and on May 5, 1851, sent the Common Council a message recommending "the purchase and laying out of a park on a scale which will be worthy of the city," but not indicating a definite site.

The fight was now well begun; and when opposition appeared to the park project *in toto,* the *Evening Post* naturally felt that upon it lay the chief responsibility for defending the compaign. The *Journal of Commerce* attacked the scheme, declaring that the cost to the taxpayer would be tremendous, that New York city already owned park lands worth $8,386,000, and that the cool waters and green country surrounding the city made more unnecessary. The *Post's* answer was contemptuous. As for the cost, the money spent would, like that laid out upon the Croton water system, be an economy in the end. "Every investment of capital that renders the city more healthy, convenient, and beautiful, attracts both strangers and residents, and leads to a liberal patronage of every department of trade." The fact that the city already had eight million dollars worth of park area had nothing to do with the question. The argument was as absurd as it would be to compute the area covered by the city streets, estimate their value, and make that a reason for narrowing the Bowery or Broadway. London and Paris, like New York, had waters and a green surrounding country within easy reach, but no Londoner or Parisian would dispense with his parks.

Mayor Kingsland's message was referred to a committee of the Council, which recommended that Jones's Wood be selected, and the Council, adopting this recommendation, applied to the Legislature for a law to authorize the establishment of the park. In July, 1851, the Legislature responded by passing a measure to allow the city to take possession of Jones's Wood.

But by this time it was believed by many citizens that the 160-acre stretch upon the East River would be insuf-

ficient, and that the "range of parks and public gardens along the central part of the island" which Bryant had suggested in 1845 would be preferable. Downing deserves great credit for his insistence that Jones's Wood would be "only a child's playground." London, he pointed out, already possessed parks aggregating 6,000 acres, and New York should now acquire at least 500. Such a tract "may be selected between Thirty-ninth street and the Harlem River, including a varied surface of land, a good deal of which is yet waste area. . . . In that area there would be space enough to have broad reaches of park and pleasure-ground, with a real feeling of the beauty and breadth of green fields, the perfume and freshness of nature." The Common Council was impressed, and in August appointed a committee to ascertain whether "some other site" was best.

By the autumn of 1851 three main parties had taken shape upon the question. A large and influential body of business men wanted no park whatever; a considerable group of citizens would be satisfied with Jones's Wood alone; and a growing number wished a great central park. The *Evening Post* was for taking both sites. "There is now ample room and verge enough upon the island for two parks," wrote Bryant, "whereas, if the matter is delayed for a few years, there will hardly be a space left for one." Having again and again expressed its hopes with regard to Jones's Woods, it now published glowing descriptions of the Central Park area. There was no part of the island, it said, better adapted to the purpose. "The elevation in some parts rising to the height of one hundred and forty feet above tidewater, and the valleys in other parts being some forty feet below the grading of the streets, a richly diversified surface is presented, to which a great variety of ornamental and picturesque effects may easily be given." The valleys abounded in springs and streams, which could quickly be converted into artificial lakes, while the Croton aqueduct could supply water for fountains.

By the efforts of leading citizens, City Hall, and the

friendly part of the press, the Legislature in the summer of 1853 was induced to sanction the creation of both parks, passing two separate bills. This filled those who opposed any park at all with rage. Admit the possibility of two huge pleasure grounds, aggregating perhaps more than a thousand acres? "What is it, in effect," demanded the *Journal of Commerce,* "but a law or laws to drive our population more and more over to Brooklyn, Williamsburgh, Staten Island, Jersey City, etc., by creating a barrier half a mile to two miles wide, north and south, and occupying half the island east and west, over which population cannot conveniently pass? If ever these projects should be carried into effect, they will cost our citizens millions of dollars. . . . Small parks would be a public blessing; and might be as numerous as the health and comfort of our citizens would require, but a perpetual edict of desolation against two and one half square miles of this small island, might better come from the bitterest enemies of our city than from its friends." On the contrary, replied the *Evening Post,* the park would dissuade residents of Manhattan, made desperate by the congestion, dirt, and noise of the streets, from removing to greener and more spacious districts like Brooklyn and New Brighton. Even after the parks were created, the island would offer room for four or five million people. The same sort of skeptics had assailed the Croton project.

Nor did the *Journal of Commerce* lack help. In 1854 Mayor Jacob Westervelt spoke with hostility in his annual message of the two park projects. The Central Park enactment, he said, reserved six hundred acres in the center of the island, "toward which the flood of population is rapidly pouring"; while its limits embraced "an area vastly more extensive than is required for the purpose, and deprives the citizens of the use of land for building purposes, much of which cannot be judiciously spared." As for Jones's Wood, it ought not to be taken at all. "The shore on the margin of this park is generally bold, affording a depth of water invaluable for commercial purposes." The *Evening Post* denied that

the tide of population was setting toward the center of the island, saying that it moved fastest up the Hudson and East Rivers—an historical fact. The waterfront of Jones's Wood was probably not more than one two-hundredth of the island's whole margin. "Can we have no fresh air, no green trees, no agreeable walks and drives, that Smith may have more houses to let, and Brown and Co. have less distance to go to their warehouses and ships?"

The endeavor to save Jones's Wood failed in 1854, and for a time it seemed likely that the proposed area of Central Park would be decidedly reduced. A member of the State Senate that year introduced a bill for slicing one-sixth off each side of the park on Fifth Avenue and Eighth Avenue, for shortening it at both ends, and for "interspersing the park into suitable squares connecting with each other but on which, or parts of which, family edifices may be erected." This, as the *Evening Post* said, was simply a scheme to destroy the park. It could understand "that the eye accustomed to look upon the dollar as the only attractive object in this world, would not find the beauty of a park 'materially lessened' when beholding it covered with rent-paying brick and mortar; but the idea of 'public recreation' among dwelling houses, in open spaces like Union and Washington Squares . . . is too absurd." When hearings were held this same month (January, 1854), upon Mayor Westervelt's proposals for curtailing Central Park, the advocates of the original limits seemed to be weakening. The Mayor's supporters desired a park of about one-third the area originally proposed, and presented a petition with several thousand signatures. The chief spokesman for the opposite side, Samuel B. Ruggles, indicated his willingness to consent to a less drastic reduction, making the park extend from Sixth Avenue to Eighth, or from Fifth to Seventh, instead of from Fifth to Eighth. But against any weakening whatever of the plan as it stood the *Evening Post* protested energetically. In the heart of London were more than 1,500 acres of park, it said, which would com-

mand high prices for building lots, yet New York jobbers grumbled over sparing 700. The people owed it "to the thousands coming after them, who will before many years make this city the first in the world in point of size, to bequeath them pleasure grounds commensurate with its greatness."

The struggle continued until, in February, 1856, following a favorable court decision, Bryant could congratulate the city that it had been won, and that the landscaping of Central Park might begin within a few months. This was eleven years after his original proposal. He, more than any one else, deserves to be called the father of the idea; though Downing's labors in promoting it were quite as great as his.

II

These were years in which much had to be said of the defects of the municipal services, and especially of the police. When the forties began there was no force for the prevention of crime, and only a small, underpaid watch for making arrests. Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., remarked in the *Evening Post* of September, 1841, upon "the frequency of atrocious crimes"; why was it "that brutal crimes, murders, and rapes have suddenly become so common?" The answer, he thought, was that New Yorkers elected their city administrations for their views upon national questions, not because they would furnish efficient government. It was then held shocking that in less than two years, 1838-9, there had been six murders in the city and no convictions. On the Fourth of July in 1842 a German named Rosseler, who kept a quiet beer garden on Twenty-first Street, ejected some ruffians from it; and two days later they returned, burnt his house, destroyed his property, and almost killed a neighbor whom they mistook for him. The *Evening Post* was moved to demand "a police which has eyes and ears for all these enormities, and hands to seize the offenders." Just a week before Mayor Morris called upon the Legis-

lature (May 29, 1843) in his annual message to provide an adequate police, Bryant penned another protest:

> We maintain a body of watchmen, but they are of no earthly use, except here and there to put an end to a street brawl, and sometimes to pick up a drunken man and take him to the watch house. In some cases, they have been suspected of being in a league with the robbers. At present, we hear of a new case of housebreaking about as often as every other day. Within a few days past, in one neighborhood in the upper part of town, two houses have been broken into and plundered, and an attempt has been made to set fire to another.
>
> Of course there will be no end to this evil, until there is a reform in the police regulations—until a police of better organization and more efficiency shall be introduced. Our city swarms with daring and ingenious rogues, many of whom have been driven from the Old World, and who find no difficulty in exercising their vocation here with perfect impunity.

"Our city, with its great population and vast extent, can hardly be said to have a police," wrote the editor again in the following February. But immediately after the election of James Harper, the publisher, as Mayor, a force of 200 patrolmen was organized, a number soon increased to 800. When Mayor William V. Brady in 1847 proposed abolishing them and restoring the watch system, the newspaper was amazed. The night watchmen had never arrested any one when it was avoidable, for every arrest meant that the officer lost half of the next day from his usual work testifying at the trial. The watch had never stopped a public disturbance—the abolition and flour riots had destroyed property that would have supported a police force several years; but the police had quelled several incipient outbreaks. The *Evening Post* was not for abolishing, but for improving the new force. One of the reforms it sought was the clothing of the men in distinctive uniforms. As it explained again and again, a uniformed policeman could be seen from a distance and accosted for information or help; he would be obeyed by rowdies when a policeman out of uniform would lack authority; and he could not

loiter in corner groggeries. This salutary improvement was finally effected in the fall of 1853.

As for the fire department, New York depended upon the volunteer system from the time the *Evening Post* was founded until 1865, and at no date after Bryant's return from Europe in 1836 had his journal any patience with it. There was never any difficulty in making the force large enough; when abolished, it consisted of 125 different hose, engine, and ladder companies. The objection was to its personnel. Gangs of desperate young blackguards, said the *Post* at the beginning of 1840, assembled nightly near the engine-houses, devoted themselves to ribaldry, drinking, fighting, and buffoonery, and not infrequently were guilty of riots, robbery, and assaults upon women. They levied forced contributions upon storekeepers to buy liquor and pay their fines whenever they were jailed. At conflagrations they carried off whatever movables were spared by the flames. The volunteer system, collecting these ruffians in various capacities, gave them the opportunity to gratify their restless love of excitement, destroyed their fitness for regular employment, and rapidly made them confirmed drunkards. The clanship engendered by the hostility of the different companies led to bloody street fights. What should be done? The *Evening Post* recommended "the prohibition of the volunteer system by penal enactments"; and if the city could not support a paid force, the abandonment of the field to the insurance companies.

In September, 1841, the *Evening Post* was again vigorously denouncing "the desperate scoundrels nourished by the fire department." These denunciations it had ample opportunity to keep up month by month, for the frequency of incendiarism and of street affrays among the volunteer companies was appalling. The best companies were ill-equipped, since not until 1856, after obstinate opposition, were really powerful fire engines introduced from Cincinnati. The regular firemen were accompanied by a swarm of "runners" and irregular assistants, many of them known to be guilty of arson. Whenever

two rival companies wished a trial of skill, a fire was sure to break out in a convenient place. The subscriptions for funds circulated among shopkeepers and householders were little better than blackmail, for it was well known that those who withheld contributions were peculiarly liable to fires. In their deadly feuds the companies, fighting with hammers, axes, knives, and pistols, furnished the morgue and the hospitals with dozens of subjects a year. Thieves frequently started conflagrations. We read in the *Evening Post* just after the destruction of Metropolitan Hall (1854):

> At the fire on Saturday night, about half of the goods that were thrown out of the windows of the La Farge Hotel, it has been estimated, were carried away by thieves. The inmates of the Bond Street House, who were obliged suddenly to decamp, found afterwards that their rooms had been rifled, and all the valuables which they left behind carried away. . . .
>
> There is no city in the world where the thefts committed at fires are so many and so considerable as with us. The rogues have an organization which brings them in an instant to the spot, the goods are passed rapidly from hand to hand, and disappear forever. A large fire is a windfall to the whole tribe.

Cincinnati the previous year, as the *Post* said, had substituted a paid fire department for the volunteer system. It was disgraceful for New York to depend on a violent, licentious body which was educating the city's youth in turbulence and rowdiness and was often worse than useless when the firebell sounded. The insurance companies at this time kept eighty men, at a cost of $30,000, to guard against fires, and many merchants and families employed private watchmen. But relief did not come for more than a decade.

Similar complaints rose constantly from the *Evening Post* regarding the foulness of the streets. It said in the early forties that they ought to be swept daily, as they were in London and Paris, and by machinery; that with New York's hot summer climate and the popular habit of throwing offal into the gutters, it was intolerable to

have them cleaned only every two or three days. In 1846 it called the neglect "scandalous," the dust and odors "insufferable." The reason why horse-brooms were not employed was that the use of manual labor gave employment to gangs whose votes the ward-heelers wanted at election time; but really no men need be thrown out of work—they could be set to repairing the broken pavements. When the Crystal Palace exhibition was held in New York in 1853, the British section contained two street-sweeping machines, one of which not only gathered together but loaded the dirt. The machines, it was true, could not vote, but by their use, according to the *Evening Post's* calculations, the cost of cleaning New York might be reduced from $330,000 a year to between $50,000 and $90,000. Next year Bryant gave publicity to the experiment of John W. Genin, a Broadway merchant, who collected $2,000 from his business neighbors, obtained horse-brooms, and at an expense of $450 a week, for a month, made Broadway from Bowling Green to Union Square look like "a new-scrubbed kitchen floor."

Not until the end of the thirties did allegations of corruption in the city government become frequent in Bryant's editorial columns. In August, 1843, we find the *Evening Post* beginning the complaints against the Charter which it was to maintain without interruption until the early seventies. It believed and continued to believe that the two boards of aldermen and assistant aldermen, soon nicknamed "the forty thieves," had too much power. "They are at once our municipal legislature and our municipal executive; in part also, they are our municipal judiciary; they are the directors of the city finances; they are the fountain of patronage; they are all this for the greatest commercial city in the western world." Their government it held to be always expensive and arbitrary, often inefficient, and sometimes dishonest.

The *Post* supported an abortive effort to amend the Charter in 1846, and in 1853, after Azariah Flagg as Controller had stripped some flagrant extravagance and grafting, it gave its voice to another movement which

proved successful. Tweed was at this time an alderman. The newspaper charged the body of which he was a member with selling city property and valuable franchises for nominal prices, and then by its control of the courts quashing all efforts at prosecution. When by a smashing popular vote (June 7, 1853) the new Charter was carried, abolishing the Board of Assistant Aldermen, and excluding the aldermen from sitting in the courts of Oyer and Terminer and of the Sessions, the *Post* said that "a more significant and humiliating rebuke was never administered upon a body of public officers in this State before." It little thought then that the corruption of the past was but a trifle to the corruption coming.

Bryant's place as the foremost citizen of the lusty young metropolis was by 1850 becoming secure. He, Irving, and Cooper were universally regarded as the country's greatest literary men. Irving was passing his final placid years at Sunnyside; Cooper on Otsego Lake, one of the most quarrelsome men in the country, was near the end of his stormy career. The city heard of them only occasionally. But Bryant was in the prime of life, seen almost daily on the streets, and heard upon every passing question. In the late forties he began to be known as a speaker upon public occasions. He delivered his eulogy upon the artist Cole in 1848 with much nervousness, but by 1851, when he presided over the press banquet to Kossuth, he had acquired self-confidence and ease. Thereafter he was in constant demand for addresses to all kinds of audiences—literary groups, the New York Historical Society, the Scotch when they celebrated the centenary of Burns's birth, the Germans in their Schiller celebration, and so on. His increasing prestige in the city was naturally reflected upon the *Evening Post*.

CHAPTER NINE

LITERARY ASPECTS OF BRYANT'S NEWSPAPER, 1830-1855

FOR reasons fairly evident Bryant seldom used the *Evening Post* for the publication of his poems; he was too modest, and the magazines of the day too earnestly besought him for whatever he might write. In 1832 he brought out "The Prairies" in it, and in 1841 "The Painted Cup"—that was all in early years. He had no time for literary essays, even had he felt the *Post* the place for them. As for the new books, no one yet thought that dailies should give them more than brief notices; moreover, Bryant disrelished book-reviewing, a task against which he had protested while a magazine editor, and he never quite trusted his judgment upon new volumes of poetry. The *Evening Post* had less literary distinction in his early editorship than might be supposed; but it had much literary interest.

The most interesting book comments of the thirties were upon British travels in America. England did not like it when Hawthorne, in "Our Old Home," called the British matron beefy. The United States did not like Dickens's portrait of Col. Jefferson Brick, praising the ennobling institution of nigger slavery; of Prof. Mullit, who at the last election had repudiated his father for voting the wrong ticket; and Gen. Fladdock, who halted his denunciation of British pride to snub Martin Chuzzlewit when he learned that Martin had come in the steerage. At that period the United States was as sensitive as a callow youth. "We people of the Universal Yankee Nation," remarked the *Evening Post* in 1833, "much as we may affect to despise the strictures of such travelers as Fearon, Capt. Roos, Basil Hall, and Mrs. Trollope, are yet mightily impatient under their censure, and manifest on the appearance of each successive book about our

country a great anxiety to get hold of it and devour its contents."

Most Americans joined in indiscriminating complaints over the animadversions of the British travelers. A few were inclined to applaud the less extreme criticism in the hope that the sound portions might be taken to heart. Bryant thought that the country had been "far too sensitive" to Basil Hall, calling that naval traveler "a good sort of prejudiced English gentleman, who saw things in a pretty fair light for a prejudiced man." He had a high opinion of parts of Miss Martineau's travels, though he wrote his wife that she had been given a wrong impression in some particulars by Dr. Karl Follen and the narrow-minded Boston abolitionists. Twice he asked *Evening Post* readers (1832-3) to remember that although Mrs. Trollope might be shrewish, she was also shrewd, and that if she had exaggerated some of the national foibles, she had sketched others accurately. In her "Domestic Manners of the Americans," he believed, "there was really a good deal to repay curiosity. That work, notwithstanding all its misrepresentations, exaggerations, and prejudices, was a very clever and spirited production, and contained a deal of truth which, however unpalatable, has at least proved of useful tendency." He called Capt. Marryat's "Diary in America" a "blackguard book," more flippant than profound, and deplored the fact that Charles Augustus Murray's "Travels in America," which was issued at the same time (1839), and was the work of "a well-disposed, candid, gentlemanly sort of person," would not have one-tenth the sale. An excerpt from the dramatic criticism of the *Evening Post* in September, 1832, shows how effective Mrs. Trollope actually was in improving our manners. At a performance by Fanny Kemble, a gentleman, between acts, assumed a sprawling position upon a box railing:

> Hissings arose, and then bleatings, and then imitations of the lowing of cattle; still the unconscious disturber pursued his chat —still the offending fragment of his coat-tail hung over the side.

At last there was a laugh, and cries of "Trollope! Trollope! Trollope!" with roars of laughter, still more loud and general.

But the most important visit of a foreigner after Lafayette's was the American tour of Dickens in the early months of 1842. It is of special interest in the history of the *Evening Post* as marking the active beginning of a campaign in which it took the leading part among American dailies—the campaign for international copyright, lasting a full half century.

"The popularity of Mr. Dickens as a novelist throws almost all other contemporary popularity into the shade," the *Evening Post* had exclaimed on March 31, 1839, when each successive installment of "Nicholas Nickleby" was being received with unprecedented enthusiasm in America. "His humor is frequently broad farce, and his horrors are often exaggerated, extravagant, and improbable; but he still has so much humor, and so much pathos, that his defects are overlooked." His striking originality the paper also praised. In 1840-41 came the "Old Curiosity Shop," which, as the *Post* noted, was issued in numbers as rapidly as the text could be brought overseas, and caught up in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia by piratical publishers. When Dickens spoke at a public dinner in Boston he recalled how from all parts of America, from cities and frontier, he had received letters about Little Nell. There were few educated Americans who were not acquainted with these books, or with the earlier "Pickwick" or "Oliver Twist"; and the news that this genius of thirty was to visit the country sent a thrill throughout it.

Before the end of January, 1842, readers of the *Evening Post* and other New York papers learned how Dickens had reached Halifax and been given a reception in the Parliament House. A few days after, the *Post* published an account of his welcome in Boston. He was at the Tremont House, the halls and environs of which were crowded; one distinguished caller followed another; whenever he went out to see the sights, or the theater, he was given an ovation; and deputations were arriving

with invitations from distant cities and towns. "Mr. Dickens, we fear, is made too much a lion for his own comfort," observed the paper, and repeated the warning next day. On Feb. 2 it gave nearly an eighth of its reading matter to an account of plans for the great Boz Ball, as laid at a public meeting at the Astor House, presided over by Mayor Robert H. Morris. The Park Theater was to be converted into a ballroom, and its alcoves fitted up into representations of the Old Curiosity Shop's corners, in which scenes from Dickens's novels might be illustrated. On Feb. 7 there appeared an account of the ceremonial Dickens dinner in Boston, with the happy speech of Mayor Quincy. An invitation to a public dinner in New York, signed among others by Bryant and Theodore Sedgwick, had meanwhile been dispatched to Dickens.

The Boz Ball on the fourteenth was, said the *Evening Post* in an account that was half news, half editorial, "one of the most magnificent that has ever been given in this city. The gorgeousness of the decorations and the splendor of the dresses, no less than the immense throng, glittering with silks and jewels, contributed to the show and impressiveness of the occasion. It is estimated that nearly 3,000 people were present, all richly dressed and sparkling with animation." Dickens's letters bear this out—"from the roof to the floor, the theater was decorated magnificently; and the light, glitter, glare, noise, and cheering baffle my descriptive powers." The great crowd made dancing an ordeal, but the novelist and his wife remained until they were almost too tired to stand. Some of the newspapers drew heavily upon the imagination in their personal references to Dickens. They told how, while a charming young man, bright-eyed, sparkling with gayety and life, his freedom of manner shocked a few fashionable people; how he could never have moved in such fine society in England; and how he was "apparently thunderstruck" by the magnificence about him. The *Evening Post* confined its personal observations to the statement that Dickens wore black, "with a gay vest," and that his wife appeared in a white figured Irish tab-

inet trimmed with mazarine blue flowers, with a wreath of the same color about her head, and pearl necklace and earrings. It described the tableaux in full—Mr. Leo Hunter's fancy dress party, the middle-aged lady in the hotel room that Pickwick invaded, Mr. and Mrs. Mantalini in Ralph Nickleby's office, the Stranger and Barnaby Rudge, and so on.

The Boz Dinner, at which Bryant was a leading figure, received no less than three columns, crowding out all editorial matter—pretty good evidence that Bryant himself wrote the report. Washington Irving presided, and made a few halting remarks, toasting Dickens as the guest of the nation. "There," he said as he took his seat (Bryant of course did not mention this), "I told you I should break down, and I've done it." The *Evening Post* gave a full transcript of Dickens's speech, much of which was a tribute to Irving, and which concluded with a reference to the presence of Bryant and Halleck as making appropriate a toast to American literature. The dinner closed with a storm of applause for the sentiment, "The Works of Our Guest—Like Oliver Twist, We Ask for More"; and the *Evening Post* was soon reporting Dickens's reception in Washington.

Some observers were puzzled by the enthusiasm of Dickens's reception, and the *Courrier des Etats Unis* tried to account for it by several theories: first, because Americans were eager to refute the accusation that they cared nothing for art and everything for money; second, because they supposed Dickens was taking notes, and wished to conciliate his opinion; and third, because the austere Puritanism of America, restraining the people from many ordinary enjoyments, made them seize upon such occasions as a vent for their natural love of excitement.

Bryant admitted that there was force in the third part of this explanation, but in the *Evening Post* he took the simpler view that the cordiality originated in the main from a sincere admiration for the novelist's genius. He pointed out that Dickens's excellences were of a kind that

appealed to all classes, from the stableboy to the statesman. "His intimate knowledge of character, his familiarity with the language and experience of low life, his genuine humor, his narrative power, and the cheerfulness of his philosophy, are traits that impress themselves upon minds of every description." But his higher traits were such as particularly recommended him to Americans. "His sympathies seek out that class with whom American institutions and laws sympathize most strongly. He has found subjects of thrilling interest in the passions, sufferings, and virtues of the mass." For itself, while regretting a certain excess of fervor in Dickens's welcome, the *Evening Post* regarded it as a healthy token. "We have so long been accustomed to seeing the homage of the multitude paid to men of mere titles, or military chieftains, that we have grown tired of it. We are glad to see the mind asserting its supremacy—to find its rights generally recognized. We rejoice that a young man, without birth, wealth, title, or a sword, whose only claims to distinction are in his intellect and heart, is received with a feeling that was formerly rendered only to conquerors and kings."

Dickens's visit was not merely for pleasure or observation, and in his endeavors to promote the cause of international copyright legislation the *Post* was already keenly interested. As early as 1810 Coleman, under the heading, "Imposition," had attacked the pirating of "Travels in the Northern Part of the United States," by Edward A. Kendall, an Englishman whom Coleman knew, as not only "a trespass upon the rights of the author," but a fraud upon the public, since the edition was mutilated. In 1826 he or Bryant had commented acridly upon the appearance of a Cambridge edition of Mrs. Barbauld's poems at the same time that the New York publishers, G. and C. Carvill, brought out an authorized edition the profits of which went to the author's heirs. Miss Martineau, sojourning in America in 1836, had taken up the question with Bryant. Upon returning home she had sent him a copy of a petition by many English writers,

including Dickens and Carlyle, to Congress, together with copies of brief letters by Wordsworth, Miss Edgeworth, Lord Brougham, and others indorsing it; and it was published with hearty commendation in the *Evening Post.*

The question was one in which Bryant, like Cooper and Irving, had a selfish as well as altruistic interest. All American authors were trying to sell their wares to publishers and readers who could get English books without payment of royalty. Each of Dickens's works, as it appeared, was snapped up and placed on the market for twenty-five cents or less. "Barnaby Rudge," during his tour of this country, was advertised in the *Evening Post* as available, complete, in two issues of the *New World,* for a total cost of sixteen and one-fourth cents. The next week it was issued under one cover for twenty-five cents. The novels of Bulwer, Disraeli, and Ainsworth were presented in the same way, as was the poetry of Hood and Tennyson. Napier's "Peninsular War" was advertised in the *Post* in 1844 by J. S. Redfield in nine volumes at a quarter dollar apiece, and Milman's edition of Gibbon, with his notes copyright in England, by Harpers in fifteen parts at the same price.

In his speech at the Boston dinner "Boz" boldly set forth the injustice which he believed the lack of an American international copyright law was doing English writers. Several Boston journals were offended, while the paper-makers belonging to the "Home League" in New York met to express opposition to any new copyright legislation. Bryant at once (on Feb. 11) took Dickens's side in the *Evening Post.* If the American laws allowed every foreigner to be robbed of his money and baggage the moment he landed, he wrote, and closed the courts to his claims for redress, the nation would be condemned as a den of thieves. "When we deny a stranger the same right to the profits of his own writings as we give to our citizens, we commit this very injustice; the only difference is that we limit the robbery to one kind of property."

At the New York dinner Dickens advanced the same

subject in a few words. "I claim that justice be done; and I prefer the claim as one who has a right to speak and be heard," the *Evening Post* quoted him. He breakfasted with Bryant and Halleck, and was entertained at the poet's home, where he probably spoke to him in private and received assurances of the *Post's* support. On May 9 there appeared a letter from Dickens "To the Editor of the *Evening Post*," dated April 30 at Niagara Falls, in which he repeated his appeal. With it he enclosed a short letter from Carlyle, wherein the Scotchman thanked him because "We learn by the newspapers that you everywhere in America stir up the question of international copyright, and thereby awaken huge dissonance where else all were triumphant unison for you." He also enclosed a much longer address "To the American People," signed by Bulwer, Campbell, Tennyson, Talfourd, Hood, Leigh Hunt, Hallam, Sydney Smith, Rogers, Forster, and Barry Cornwall. This eminent group pointed out that the lack of an international copyright agreement was a serious injury to American authors, who had to compete on unfair terms with the British; and it argued that the supply of standard English books in a cheap form would not really be diminished by such copyright legislation. Books were sold at a high or low price not because they were copyrighted or uncopyrighted, but in proportion as they obtained few or many readers; and the educational system of the United States guaranteed a large reading public.

Bryant reinforced these letters with an editorial, remarkable as an expression of confidence in the brilliant future of American letters. It was a mistake, he maintained, to suppose that in the absence of an international copyright agreement the United States had wholly the best of the situation:

> Within the last year, the number of books written by American authors, which have been successful in Britain, is greater than that of foreign works which have been successful in this country. Robertson's work on Palestine, Stephens's Travels in Central

America, Catlin's book on North American Indians, Cooper's Deerslayer, the last volume of Bancroft's American history, several works prepared by Anthon for the schools—here is a list of American works republished in England within the year for which we should be puzzled to find an equivalent in works written in England within the same time, and republished here. Our eminent authors are still engaged in their literary labors. Cooper within a fortnight past has published a work stamped with all the vigor of his faculties, Prescott is occupied in writing the History of Peru, Bancroft is engaged in continuing the annals of his native country, Sparks is still employed in his valuable historical labors, and Stephens is pushing his researches in Central America, with a view of giving their results to the world. We were told, the other day, of a work prepared for the press by Washington Irving, which would have appeared ere this but for the difficulties in the way of securing a copyright for it in England, as well as here.

He drew an inspiring picture of the effect of the success of these authors in raising up aspirants for literary fame. Irving had just told him, he wrote, "that if American literature continued to make the same progress as it had done for twenty years past, the day was not very far distant when the greater number of books designed for readers of the English language would be produced in America."

The editor continued his unavailing efforts for a sound copyright law year after year, decade after decade. He took pains to do justice to the opposition, recognizing that it was by no means all mercenary, and that economists like Matthew Carey advanced arguments worthy of examination. When Dickens published a letter (July 14, 1842) in the London *Morning Chronicle,* asserting that the barrier to the reform in America was the influence of "the editors and proprietors of newspapers almost exclusively devoted to the republication of popular English works," and that they were "for the most part men of very low attainments, and of more than indifferent reputation," Bryant hastened in the *Evening Post* to call this a misrepresentation. He knew many sincere and respectable men who condemned the international copyright proposals from the best of motives. But

the crusade was always near his heart. When in 1843 a petition for the needed law was presented to Congress by ninety-seven firms and persons engaged in the book trade, he supported it, and he did the same when ten years later five New York publishers addressed Secretary of State Everett in behalf of a copyright treaty with Great Britain. At this time he believed that the chief obstacle was the simple indifference of Congressmen; that they did not comprehend the question, nor try to comprehend it, because no party advantage or disadvantage was connected with it.

In the thirties and forties book-reviewing, in the strict sense of the phrase, was almost unknown in the New York daily press. The chief exceptions to the rule were furnished by Edgar Allan Poe, who in the middle forties contributed some genuine criticism to N. P. Willis's *Mirror* and other journals, and by Margaret Fuller. Miss Fuller, writing in the *Tribune* for more than a year and a half preceding her visit to Europe in 1846, performed a signal service to American letters by her courage and acuteness, for her criticism of Longfellow as too foreign in his themes and of Lowell as too imitative had a salutary effect upon those poets. But Poe and Margaret Fuller were passing meteors in New York journalism. Until George Ripley and John Bigelow joined the *Tribune* and *Evening Post* respectively in 1849 mere hasty notices were given most books.

The newspaper most conspicuously in a position to pronounce upon new volumes was the *Evening Post*, for the literary judgment of Bryant and Parke Godwin was excellent. But Bryant had no ambition to be known as a critic. Apart from his shrewd but not deeply penetrative discourses upon Irving, Cooper, Verplanck, and Halleck, he wrote only a half-dozen extensive literary essays, the best known being his really fine "Poets and Poetry of the English Language," with its insistence upon a "luminous style." Moreover, so straitened were the paper's circumstances and so small in consequence was its staff, that he and Godwin had no time for reading and

reviewing. "I see the outside of almost every book that is published, but I read little that is new," runs a letter of Bryant's to Dana in 1837. Frank avowal was frequently made that a formal review was not within the *Evening Post's* powers. The notice of Cooper's "Wyandotte" (1843) opened with the remark that "we have not had time to read it, but we are informed by the preface. . . ." Five years later Bryant wrote of J. T. Headley's "Cromwell": "We have not time in the midst of the continual hurry in which those are involved who write for a daily newspaper, to examine the work with any minuteness; this will be done doubtless by professed critics."

Slight as were the *Post's* comments upon most books, a particular interest attaches to those upon current volumes of poetry, for Bryant wrote them; his associate, John Bigelow, has expressed surprise that Parke Godwin, in his biography, did not collect them. In the "Fable for Critics," Lowell speaks of Bryant's "iceolation," and biographers of both Longfellow and Poe have accused him of indifference to these younger poets. There is much evidence, however, as in Bryant's admiring letter to Longfellow in 1846, that the charge is unfair; and a study of the *Evening Post* files indicates that its editor carefully followed the work of his juniors in poetry, was glad to bring it to public notice, and was a good deal more prone to over-praise than to underrate it. Bryant was the dean among American poets, the first to gain fame, and regarded by Griswold, Walt Whitman, and many others as the best of them; as the Bryant Festival in 1864 showed, in which Holmes, Lowell, Emerson, and Whittier participated, they all looked up to him.

Longfellow was the next eldest of the truly great poets. In the pages of the *United States Review* in the twenties some of his earliest poems are found side by side with Bryant's. In later life he acknowledged to Bryant how much he owed the latter: "When I look back upon my early years, I cannot but smile to see how much in them is really yours. It was an involuntary imita-

tion, which I most readily confess." Bryant was interested in his career long before he had published a volume of verse, and took care in the *Evening Post* to give his first two books, the prose "Outre Mer" (1835) and "Hyperion" (1839) due praise. Of the former he said that it "is very gracefully written, the style is delightful, the descriptions are graphic, and the sketches of character have often an agreeable vein of quiet humor." The latter was treated a little less warmly. The romance is "tinged with peculiarities derived from the author's fondness for German literature," Bryant wrote, and its strain of deeper reflection "now and then passes into the grand dimness of German speculation." The story was slight, and had little attraction for those who wished a narrative of crowded incident. But the verdict as a whole was favorable: "upon the slender thread of his narrative the author has hung a tissue of agreeable sketches of the different parts of Germany, supposed to be visited by the hero, delineations of character, and reflections upon morals and literature."

The *Evening Post's* review of Longfellow's first volume of poems, "Voices of the Night" (1839; signed J. Q. D.) was short but flattering. It quoted the purest poetry of the little book:

> I heard the trailing garments of the night
> Sweep through her marble halls!

and its criticism emphasized the two youthful qualities which should have been most emphasized, simplicity and freshness. "These voices of the night breathe a sweet and gentle music, such as befits the time when the moon is up, and all the air is clear, and soft, and still. The original poems in the volume are characterized by the truest simplicity of thought and style; the thin veil of mysticism which is thrown over some of them adds only grace to the picture, without tantalizing the eye." Longfellow's second volume, the "Poems on Slavery" (1842), came as a shock to a society as yet not inured to anti-slavery doctrines. The editors of *Graham's Magazine*

wrote the author that the word "slavery" was never allowed to appear in a Philadelphia magazine, and that the publisher objected to have even the title of the book mentioned in his pages. Till a later date Harper's in New York similarly objected to mention of the slavery question. But Bryant quoted "The Slave's Dream" in full, and said of the sheaf: "They have all the characteristics of Longfellow's later poems, adding to the grace and harmony of his earlier, a vein of deeper and stronger feeling, maturer thought, bolder imagery, and a more suggestive manner."

Thus the successive issues of Longellow's verse were all hailed with kindly appreciation. When "Ballads and Other Poems" appeared, Bryant praised (Jan. 10, 1842) the "grace and melody" with which the author handled hexameters in a translation from Tegner, and the "noble and affecting simplicity" of the result, while he pronounced the miscellaneous poems beautiful. "Evangeline," four years later, inspired the publication in the *Post* of an anonymous burlesque imitation, next the editorial columns, which it is almost certain is Bryant's. He wrote such humorous trifles till his latest years, and he accompanied this with some remarks upon German hexametric verse, with which he was thoroughly familiar. Dated "in the ante-temperance period of our history," it showed old Tom Robinson seated in his elbow chair:

Red was the old man's nose, with frequent potations of cider,
Made still redder by walking that day in the teeth of the north wind.
Warmth from the blazing fire had heightened the tinge of its scarlet;
While at each broad red flash from the hearth it seemed to grow redder.

"Jemmy, my boy," he said, and turned to a tow-headed urchin,
"Bring your poor uncle a mug of cider up from the cellar."
Straightway rose from the chimney nook the obedient Jemmy . . .
Took from the cupboard shelves a mug of mighty dimensions,
Opened the cellar door, and down the cellarway vanished.
Soon he came back with the mighty vessel brimming and sparkling,

Full and fresh, the old man took it and raised it with both hands,
Drained the whole at a draught, and handed it, dripping and empty,
Back to the boy, and winking hard with both eyes as he did it,
Stretched out his legs to the fire, while his nose grew redder and redder.

When "The Seaside and the Fireside" was published in 1850, Bryant gave especial praise to "The Building of the Ship," in many ways the best poem Longfellow ever wrote. An unpoetical subject; but "the author treats it with as much grace of imagery as if it were a fairy tale, and finds in it ample matter suggestive of beautiful trains of thought." He quoted the fervent closing apostrophe to the nation threatened by civil war, "Sail on, O Union, strong and great!"; and by accident, in the adjoining column, part of the *Post's* Washington correspondence, lay a paragraph describing the sensation aroused by the secessionist manifesto of Clingman, a fire-eating North Carolina Congressman. Of "Hiawatha" in 1855 Bryant said:

A long poem, founded on the traditions of the American aborigines, and their modes of life, is a somewhat hazardous experiment. Longfellow, however, has acquitted himself quite as well as we had expected. The habits of the Indians are gracefully idealized in his verses, and we recognize the author of "Evangeline" in the tenderness of the thoughts, the richness of the imagery, and the flow of the numbers. . . . A love story is interwoven with the poem, and the narrative of Hiawatha's wooing is beautifully and fancifully related. The canto of The Ghosts is wrought up with a fine supernatural effect, and the mysterious departure of Hiawatha, with which the poem closes, after the appearance of the first messenger of the Christian gospel among his countrymen, is well imagined.

Lowell's first two volumes of poems were moderately commended. "There are fine veins of thought in Lowell's verse, with frequently a fresh and vigorous expression," Bryant remarked of the second (Feb. 12, 1848). For Emerson there was a more glowing word of praise. He is "a brilliant writer, both in prose and verse, though

perhaps, as a poet, too reflective, too subjective, the modern metaphysician would call it, to suit the popular taste," Bryant commented in the *Post* of Jan. 4, 1847, when Emerson's first collection was issued. "His little address in verse to the humble bee is, however, one of the finest things of the sort—a better poem, in our estimation, than Anacreon's famous ode to the cicada." Whittier's verse, he thought in 1843, writing of "Lays of My Home," "grows better and better. With no abatement of poetic enthusiasm, his style becomes more manly, and his vein of thought richer and deeper." References to Poe, anterior to the obituary of Oct. 9, 1849, which Bryant did not write, for he was then abroad, and which called him a "genius" and "an industrious, original, and brilliant writer," are few. The *Evening Post* had remarked in 1845 that he was at least within a "t" of being a poet, and had followed his lectures that year at the Society Library. The *Express* on April 18 stated that he had discoursed at length upon the poets, and criticized his views. At this the *Post* professed amazement, for its reporter had distinctly heard Poe postpone the lecture; had he delivered it exclusively to the *Express?*

It is pleasant to record that Nathaniel Hawthorne's genius was recognized and forcibly described. Not always promptly, but always emphatically, the *Evening Post* recommended "The Scarlet Letter," "Twice-Told Tales," "The House of Seven Gables," and other books to its readers. It expressed the hope in 1851 that the success of the first-named "will awaken him to the consciousness of what he seems to have been writing in ignorance of, that the public is an important party, not only to the author's fame, but to his usefulness." It thought that much as he had accomplished, he had not yet done justice to his powers. Two years later it congratulated him upon the leisure that his appointment as consul at Liverpool should afford, and recalling that he was just at the age when Walter Scott first appeared as a novelist, said that it saw no reason why the latter half of Hawthorne's life might not be equally brilliant. Unfortunately, the

romancer had but eleven more years to live. To quote three short comments upon books by other great prose authors, one of which appeared in 1842, another in 1849, and the third in 1850, will show the general character of such notices, and illustrate how little criticism was given:

THE DEERSLAYER, or THE FIRST WAR PATH, Cooper's last novel, is one of his finest productions. In the wild forest where the scene is laid, and in the wild life of the New York hunters of the last century and their savage neighbors, his genius finds the aliment of its finest strength. The work is, as he observes, the first act in the life of Leatherstocking, though written last, and it exhibits this singular being, one of the most strongly marked and most interesting creatures of fiction, in his early youth, fresh from his education among the Delawares, and now for the first time employing in war the weapon which had gained him a reputation as a hunter. The narrative is one of intense interest from beginning to close, and the characters of the various personages with whom the hero of the story is associated, are drawn with perhaps more skill, and a deeper knowledge of human nature, than in most of the author's previous novels.

THE CALIFORNIA AND OREGON TRAIL, by Francis Parkman, is a pleasant book relating adventures and wanderings in the western wilderness, and describing the life of the western hunters and the Indian tribes. It will give those who are about to make the journey across the Rocky Mountains a good idea of the country lying between us and the regions on the Pacific Coast, and of the savage people who roam over it.

EMERSON'S REPRESENTATIVE MEN.—We have received from J. Wiley, of this city, Emerson's Seven Lectures on Representative Men, just published by Phillips, Sampson, and Company, of Boston. The work is strongly marked by the characteristics of the author—brilliant coruscations of thought, instead of a quiet, steady blaze—an avoidance of everything like a coherent system of opinions—a large range of comparison and illustration, with an occasional haziness of metaphysical conception, in which the reader is apt to lose his way. These lectures are occupied with the delineation of the characters of half a dozen of the greatest men that ever lived, each of whom Mr. Emerson makes the representative and exponent of a certain class. One of these

great men is Plato, on whose intellectual character the author expatiates like one who is truly in love with his subject.

It was deemed incumbent upon the *Evening Post* to print at least this much concerning every noteworthy American book, but it recognized no duty as regarded English works. Sometimes a volume, like Carlyle's "Chartism," would receive a column and a half, while sometimes important productions would get never a word. The *Evening Post's* criticism of Dickens's "American Notes" is given by Parke Godwin in his life of Bryant—a criticism praising some of the novelist's fault-finding and taking exception chiefly to his remarks on American newspapers. "Martin Chuzzlewit" was reviewed in 1843, and the American scenes were pronounced a failure for two reasons. "In the first place, the author knows very little about us, and in the second place, the desire of being vehemently satirical seems to unfit him for what he wishes to do, and takes from him his wonted humor and invention." But no later work by Dickens, up to the Civil War, seems to have been noticed.

Yet with all its shortcomings, the *Evening Post* maintained a literary tone. In part this arose from the pure English and the allusiveness of Bryant's editorial style; in part from the unusual attention paid to magazines and book news; and in part from the fact that literary people were attracted to it because Bryant was its editor. When G. P. R. James and Martin Tupper visited America, they published original verse in it. Miss Catharine Sedgwick, the novelist, sent it travel sketches in 1841 and later. During the years 1834-41 Cooper published many letters in the *Evening Post* upon his various libel suits and other personal matters, and at one time had Bryant's journal actively enlisted on his side. "Cooper, you know," Bryant explained to Dana in a letter of Nov. 26, 1838, "has published another novel, entitled "Home as Found," rather satirical I believe on American manners. A notice of it appeared in the *Courier* newspaper of this city, a very malignant notice indeed, containing some stories about Cooper's private conversations. Cooper arrived

in town about the time the article was published, and answered it by a short letter to the *Evening Post*, in which he gave notice that he should prosecute the publishers of the paper. It is a favorite doctrine with him just now that the newspapers tell more lies than truths, and he has undertaken to reform the practice, so far as what they say respects him personally." Webb's attack was said to have been occasioned by Cooper's having cut his acquaintance. The *Evening Post* denounced it as proceeding from personal pique, "grossly malignant," and "swaggering and silly"; and in the spring of 1841 Cooper sent the *Post* reams of controversial material.

Walt Whitman earned Bryant's grateful notice by his journalistic activities in Brooklyn in behalf of the "Barnburner" Democracy, and was praised for his tales in the *Democratic Review*, one of which the *Evening Post* reprinted (1842). During 1851 he contributed five articles. The first, called "Something About Art and Brooklyn Artists," eulogized the paintings of several obscure men, and the second, "A Letter From Brooklyn," told of the changes across the East River—how Bergen Hill was nearly leveled, a huge tract had been reclaimed from the sea near the Atlantic Dock, and Fifth Avenue was still unpaved and neglected. Whitman went down to the eastern end of Long Island that summer, for, as he wrote the *Post*, "I . . . like it far better than I could ever like Saratoga or Newport." In two June letters from Paumanok he described the joy of bathing in the clear, cold water, derided the stiff ceremoniousness of city boarders, gave some good advice to boarding-house keepers, and depicted two old natives of Marion and Rocky Point, "Uncle Dan'l" and "Aunt Rebby." Upon his return he sent a rather rhapsodic description of the opera at Castle Garden, with Bettini singing. It does not appear that Bryant had any personal interest in Whitman, and it was unfortunate that no effort was made to extend his brief connection.

Something should be said about the *Evening Post's* miscellaneous columns, a wallet into which was thrown

a wide assortment of reprinted selections. Now it was a chapter of Lord Londonderry's Travels; now Ellery Channing's reminiscences of his father; now an article from *Fraser's* on old French poetry; now a chapter from Cooper's "Wing and Wing"; now Tennyson's "Godiva," Longfellow's "Spanish Student," or Spence's anecdotes of Pope. Much might be said also of its reports of literary lectures, the course by Emerson upon "The Times" in the spring of 1842 and Holmes's course upon modern poetry in the fall of 1853 being especially well covered. Emerson was an earnest but not popular speaker, and the writer for the *Post,* either Bryant or Parke Godwin, was at first cold to him. But within a few days he was remarking that the addresses grew upon one's admiration. "Emerson convinces you that he is a man accustomed to profound and original thought, and not disposed, as at the outset you are inclined to suspect, to play with and baffle the intellects of his readers. He is eminently sincere and direct, strongly convinced of his own views, and anxious to present them in an earnest and striking manner." Parke Godwin himself early in the fifties became a lyceum star, along with Holmes, Curtis, Greeley, Horace Mann, Orville Dewey, and others.

As for drama, the most important appearances occurred, and the most important criticism was written, while Leggett was one of the editors. Leggett, as Abram C. Dayton tells us in "Last Days of Knickerbocker Life," was regarded as the especial champion of Edwin Forrest, who had made his début in 1826, and who was a warm favorite with the "Bowery Boys" and all other lovers of florid, stentorian acting. Certainly Leggett praised him highly and constantly in the *Evening Post.* In 1834 a gold medal was presented Forrest by a committee including Bryant and Leggett, who recalled in the newspaper how he had come to the city quite unknown, and had given the first electrifying demonstration of his powers when he consented, as an act of kindness to a poor actor, to appear at a benefit as Othello.

When on Sept. 18, 1832, Charles Kemble made his

first American appearance as Hamlet, he was honored with the longest dramatic criticism in the journal's history, almost three and a half columns. His towering, manly form, his Roman face, and his histrionic ability impressed Leggett, who thought that while he did not have the flashes of dazzling brilliance that Kean had, his grace, ease, and elegance almost atoned for the lack, and would have a good effect upon American acting. Fanny Kemble made her bow the following night, and was at once hailed as displaying "an intensity and truth never, we believe, yet exhibited by an actress in America, certainly never by one so young." Later, after seeing the two in more performances, Leggett concluded that they were admirable in comedy, but uneven in tragedy.

Bryant's interest in the theater was mainly a literary interest, yet he seems to have been the writer of a series of editorials in 1847, arguing for an *American* theater. He spoke of the new Broadway Theater, and the sailing of the manager to England to engage talent. Why supply the new stage from abroad? protested the *Evening Post*. "Is it to be merely a house of call for such foreign artists as may find it agreeable or profitable to visit us, at such times as they may chance to select? Or is it to be an American establishment of the highest class, with a well-selected and thoroughly trained company permanently employed, varied by star engagements as a brilliant relief to the sober background, and enlivened, from time to time, by ability from abroad? Does it, in a word, propose to go on the old beaten track so often condemned, or to draw a line for a new period . . . ?" Bryant had no use for provincialism in any form.

But when the sentiment of Forrest's supporters for an "American" theater led them in May, 1849, while their hero was playing at the Broadway House, to attack the English tragedian Macready at the Astor Place Opera House in a bloody riot, the *Evening Post* had to condemn their conduct. Its liking for Forrest himself was much cooled a year after, when, following his separation from his wife, he attacked the author N. P. Willis with a whip

on Washington Square. Two days later Forrest met Bryant and Parke Godwin walking down Broadway, and furiously demanded who had written the *Evening Post's* report of the assault, in which Forrest was said to have struck Willis from behind. Godwin, who thoroughly sympathized with Mrs. Forrest in her quarrel with her husband, replied that he was the author. The actor then turned upon him ferociously, said that the report was a d—d lie from beginning to end, that he would hold Godwin responsible for several things, and that he had told Godwin that he meant to cane Willis. "I replied," Godwin later testified, "that these were not just the terms that he used, and that he told me formerly that he meant to cut his damned heart out; to which Mr. Forrest muttered something in reply. . . ." So much for the manners of the fifties.

CHAPTER TEN

JOHN BIGELOW AS AN EDITOR OF THE "EVENING POST"

IN the closing days of 1848 John Bigelow, who like Bryant lived to be called "The First Citizen of the Republic," became one of the proprietors and editors of the *Evening Post*. His official connection with it lasted eleven years, when he graduated from it into that diplomatic field in which he won his chief fame; but his real connection might be said to have been lifelong. Bigelow's protracted career was one of great variety and interest. He lived in the lifetime of George III, Napoleon, and every President except Washington, dying in 1911. His first prominence was given him by the *Evening Post*, and thereafter he was always a landmark in New York life. John Jay Chapman wrote in 1910 that he "stands as a monument of old-fashioned sterling culture and accomplishment—a sort of beacon to the present age of ignorance and pretence, and to 'a land where all things are forgotten.'" His wide culture is attested by the variety of his books—a biography of Franklin and a work on Gladstone in the Civil War; a treatise on Molinos the quietist, and another on sleep; a history of "France and the Confederate Navy" and a biography of Tilden. It has fallen to few of our ministers to France to be so useful as he. He was prominent in almost every great civic undertaking in New York during the last half century of his life. Withal, his fine presence, simple dignity, and courtesy made him a model American gentleman.

It was with good reason that Bryant requested him to become an associate. His views were just those of the *Evening Post*. He was an old-school Democrat, but a devoted free-soiler. He was such a confirmed hater of protection that in later years he called it "a dogma in a

republic fit only for a highwayman, a fool, or a drunkard," and that he wanted absolute free trade, not merely "revision downward." He liked the pen; from his first admission to the bar, he tells us, there was never a time when he had not material before him for the study of some subject on which he intended to write. In 1841, at the age of twenty-three, he contributed an article to the *New York Review* upon Roman lawyers, and followed it with essays in the *Democratic Review*. His taste for the society of intellectual men early showed itself, and like Lord Clarendon, "he was never so content with himself as when he found himself the meanest man in the company." He finished his law studies in the office of Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., where he first met Bryant; he became intimate with Professor Da Ponte, another of Bryant's friends, and he saw much of Fitzgreene Halleck.

Bigelow had been born in Bristol, later Malden, N. Y., in 1817, where his father had a farm, a country store, and several sloops plying on the Hudson. His was a good Presbyterian family, of Connecticut stock, prosperous enough to send Bigelow first to an academy at Troy, and then successively to Washington College (later Trinity) in Hartford, and to Union College. While studying law in New York, he had the good fortune to join a club of estimable young men (1838) called The Column, many of whose members later became founders of the Century Association; to this body Wm. M. Evarts was admitted in 1840, and Parke Godwin in 1841. Another influential friend whom Bigelow made in 1837-8 was Samuel J. Tilden, then a young lawyer living with an aunt on Fifth Avenue. Tilden often wearied Bigelow by his talk on practical politics and other subjects in which the latter had no interest, but their relations soon ripened into a cordial friendship. In 1844 these two, with a veteran journalist named John L. O'Sullivan, conducted for a time a low-priced Democratic campaign sheet for the purpose of helping elect Silas Wright as Governor. Probably as a reward for this service, Gov. Wright appointed Bigelow one of the five inspectors of

Sing Sing Prison, at which it had become necessary to check notorious abuses; and when Bigelow and his associates stopped the use of bludgeons they were accused of "coddling" the prisoners as all later reformers have been.

During 1845 young Bigelow wrote many editorials for the *Evening Post* advocating the calling of a State Constitutional Convention, and asking for changes in the judiciary which that body actually made. In the spring of 1847 Bryant, wishing to train some one to succeed him, asked the young man to enter the office, but did not make an acceptable offer. A year and a half later he renewed the proposal through Tilden, saying that he would give a liberal compensation, and that when one of the partners, William G. Boggs, who had charge of the publishing, retired, he might come into the firm. Bigelow was pleased. "But," he told Tilden, "I might as well say to you here at once that I should not think it worth while to consider for a moment any proposition to enter the *Evening Post* office on a salary. Unless they want me in the firm, they don't want me enough to withdraw me from my profession." This was a wise refusal to give up his independence. The result was that after negotiations of several weeks, Boggs was induced to retire at once. Bigelow purchased three and one-tenth shares of the *Evening Post* (there were ten in all) and two shares of the job office, for $15,000, taking possession as of the date Nov. 16, 1848; later, at a cost of $2,100, he increased his holdings to a full third. He had very little money saved, and none which he could spare, but he persuaded the large-hearted lawyer, Charles O'Conor, to endorse his note for $2,500, while he became indebted to Wm. C. Bryant & Co. for the rest.

Like Bryant, Bigelow was glad to escape from law into journalism. "I have never for one instant looked back upon my former employment," his unpublished journal runs, "but with regret for the time lost in it. I do not mean that all my time was lost; on the contrary, I am satisfied that my discipline at the bar gives me important advantages over most of my associates in the editorial

calling. But I was not progressing mentally for the last two years of my practice, though I did in professional position." Financially, the exchange was a fortunate one.

At once Bigelow showed marked journalistic aptitude. He brought a lightness of touch to his writing that was as valuable as his cultivation and good judgment. One early evidence of this was a weekly series of interviews with a "Jersey ferryman," purporting to be snatches of political gossip which this illiterate but shrewd fellow picked up from Congressmen, Governors, and other public men whom he carried over the river. It enabled Bigelow to give readers the benefit of inside information obtained from Tilden, O'Conor, John Van Buren, Charles Sumner (a constant correspondent of Bigelow's), and the free-soil leaders generally. His enterprise was equally marked. In 1850, nettled by the assertion of slavery men that since the British Emancipation Act the island of Jamaica had relapsed into barbarism, he spent three weeks there making observations, and wrote an admirable series of letters to the *Evening Post*. This refutation of the slavery arguments attracted attention in England. Early in 1854, when it was necessary to give shape to the inchoate elements of the Republican party by finding a candidate, he wrote a campaign biography of Fremont in installments for the *Evening Post*, the first chapter of which Jessie Benton Fremont contributed. During the winter of 1852-4 he was in Haiti, studying the capacity of the negro for self-government, and again sending the *Evening Post* valuable correspondence. His book upon Jamaica was for some time considered the best in print, and his life of Fremont sold about 40,000 copies.

Early in 1851 Bigelow began publishing a series of random papers called "Nuces Literariæ," signed "Friar Lubin," in which he commenced one of the most famous historical controversies of the time—the controversy with Jared Sparks over the latter's methods of editing.

President Sparks of Harvard had issued in 1834-7 (redated 1842) his twelve-volume "Life and Writings of George Washington," the fruit of years of research at

home and abroad. In the fifth of the "Nuces Literariæ" (Feb. 12), Bigelow remarked that he had been greatly surprised while comparing some original letters by George Washington with the copies given by Sparks. He had heard, he said, that Hallam—Hallam had chatted with Bryant in England in 1845—had commented upon the discrepancy between Jared Spark's version of the letters, and other versions. To test the alleged inaccuracies, Bigelow had produced the recently published correspondence of Joseph Reed, at one time Washington's secretary, and long his intimate friend. Comparing the letters in Sparks's set with the same letters in the two volumes by Reed's grandson, "to my utter surprise I found every one had been altered, in what seemed to me important particulars. I found that he had not only attempted to correct the probable oversights and blunders of General Washington, but he had undertaken to improve his style and chasten his language; nay, he had in some instances gone so far as to change his meaning, and to make him the author of sentiments precisely the opposite of what he intended to write."

Bigelow proceeded, in this paper and a longer one a few days later, to state his charges in detail, alleging scores of discrepancies. It was the sort of task he liked. Later, while Minister to France, he came into possession of the MS. of Franklin's autobiography, and by careful examination found that more than 1,200 changes had been made in the text of the book, as published by Franklin's grandson, and that the last eight pages, equal in value to any eight preceding, had been wholly omitted. He published the first authentic edition of the classic, and he later brought out an edition of Franklin's complete writings which superseded Sparks's earlier collection. Now he alleged that when Washington had written that a certain sum "will be but a fleabite to our demands," Sparks had dressed this up into "totally inadequate." Washington, he said, had referred to the "dirty, mercenary spirit" of the Connecticut troops, and to "our rascally privateersmen," and Sparks had left out "dirty"

and "rascally." Washington put down, "he has wrote . . . to see," and Sparks had made it, "He has written . . . to ascertain." Washington referred to "Old Put," and Sparks translated this into "Gen. Putnam." "The Ministry durst not have gone on," declared Washington, and this appeared, "would not have dared to go on." When the commander wrote that he had "everything but the thing ready," Sparks left out "but the thing," by which Washington had meant powder.

President Sparks was ill, but the Cambridge *Chronicle* answered for him. Would not Washington have corrected his correspondence for the press, it asked, if he had known it was to be published? Bigelow answered that this was no reason why Sparks should interpose between the great man and admiring later generations. Washington did not send his letters to the press, but to friends and subordinates, and it was necessary to an accurate estimate of the man that we learn his faults of grammar and temper. "It is a great comfort for unpretending and humble men like the most of us, to know that the world's heroes are not so perfect in all their proportions as to defy imitation, and discourage the aspirations of the less mature or less fortunate."

The eminent president of Harvard maintained his silence, though the *Evening Post* recurred to the subject. In June, for example, it mentioned approvingly a project for a new edition of Washington's writings, asserting that "The *authority* of Sparks as an editor and historian may be considered as entirely destroyed by the criticism" of Bigelow. Early in 1852 it reviewed the sixth volume of Lord Mahon's History of England, the author of which censured Sparks severely upon the ground that "he has printed no part of the correspondence precisely as Washington wrote it; but has greatly altered and, as he thinks, corrected and embellished it." At last, faced by Lord Mahon as well as Bigelow, President Sparks replied. On April 2, 3, and 6, 1852, three long letters by him, later issued in pamphlet form, were published in the *Evening Post,* explaining the exact principles on which he had

worked as an editor. "I deny," he said, "that any part of this charge is true in any sense, which can authorize the censures bestowed by these writers, or raise a suspicion of the editor's fidelity and fairness."

It was an effective, though not a complete, answer that he made. He was able to show that at least one flagrant error in reprinting a letter was not his, but that of Reed's grandson. He showed that many of the alleged garblings were not real, but arose from the fact that Washington's original letters as sent out, and the copies which his secretaries transcribed into his letter-books, differed. Washington himself had revised the manuscript of his correspondence during the French war, making numerous erasures, interlineations, and corrections; and which could now be called the genuine text? As Sparks explained, the omissions over which Bigelow had grumbled were unavoidable because of the necessity of compressing material for thirty or forty volumes into twelve. But he did admit taking certain editorial liberties which would now be thought improper. "It would certainly be strange," he wrote, "if an editor should undertake to prepare for the press a collection of manuscript letters, many of them hastily written, without a thought that they would ever be published, and should not at the same time regard it as a solemn duty to correct obvious slips of the pen, occasional inaccuracies of expression, and manifest faults of grammar. . . ."

The *Evening Post* was anxious to do President Sparks justice. It admitted his industry and conscientious devotion, shown in the labor he had spent at the thirteen capitals of the original States, wherever else he could find Revolutionary papers, and in the public offices of London and Paris. It recognized that the demand for absolutely literal transcriptions was a new one in the field of scholarship. But to this demand the controversy gave a decided impetus.

Bigelow scored another success when he obtained for the *Post* most of Thomas Hart Benton's "Thirty Years' View" in advance of its issue in book form. No more

effective feature in the middle fifties could have been imagined. Benton had been the choice of many for the Presidency in 1852; his great contemporaries in Congress, Calhoun, Clay, and Webster, were now dead, and men were eager to learn secret details of the disputes and intrigues in which they had been concerned; his peculiar uprightness, his energy, and his long public experience had given him a commanding influence. He sent the chapters of his book in advance to the *Evening Post* because he, like it, had been a devoted Jacksonian, a low-tariff man, and a hater of the Bank, and was now at one with it in its free-soil views. From Bigelow's private papers we learn that the original arrangement (July, 1853) was that he should supply an installment weekly, and be paid $10 a column. So wide was the interest in the work that Appleton's first edition of the first volume, in 1854, was 30,000 copies. It aroused much pungent editorial comment, of which a single instance will suffice. An installment of the second volume which the *Evening Post* published in June, 1855, asserted that Calhoun was favorable to the Missouri Compromise when it passed, and that for the first twenty years following he found no constitutional defects in it. The Richmond *Enquirer* denied this, entitling the recollections "Historic Calumnies," and declaring:

> Instead of devoting the few remaining years of an ill-spent life to the penitential offices of truth and charity, Col. Benton expends his almost inexhaustible energies in a paroxysm of fiendish passion; and when he should be imploring mercy for his manifold sins, in rearing upon the grave of a political opponent a monument to his own undying hate and reckless mendacity.

But the *Evening Post*, with the aid, among others, of former Secretary of State John M. Clayton, had no difficulty in proving Benton right.

These were years in which the business management of the newspaper began to feel markedly the hostility of the South. Its utterances against slavery were so biting and persistent that no one below Mason's and Dixon's line

would advertise in it, and many Southern buyers boycotted New York merchants who patronized it. "Thousands of little merchants and traders in New York City," as Bigelow later said, "jealous of the rivalry of the other more prosperous houses advertising with us, were in the habit of reporting them in the South, and in that way our advertising columns were made very barren." New Englanders of large resources were equally offended by the paper's low-tariff views. Bigelow's business acumen, reinforcing Bryant's, was very much needed.

Among his first acts was the reorganization of the job printing office. The income from this branch of the establishment, the first half year of Bigelow's assistant-editorship, was but $1,812.52, and for the last half year of 1860 it was $7,295. This revolution was wrought by increasing the equipment, hiring a new foreman, and opening up new sources of business. When Bigelow became a partner the higher courts had adopted the rule that all cases reaching them on appeal should be printed. He had an extensive acquaintance among judges and lawyers, whom he gave to understand that the *Evening Post* would do legal printing more satisfactorily than most job offices, and that it would always have the work done on time. Very shortly it was in command of virtually all the legal printing, and a great deal of other business came with the current. So competent was the supervision exercised by the foreman and bookkeeper that neither Bryant nor Bigelow, after the start was made, spent a total of three days' time in this office, which was earning them $10,000 a year or more.

An equally important change was the removal in 1850 from the cramped quarters on Pine Street to a larger building on the northwest corner of Nassau and Liberty Streets. The old property had afforded room for only a hand press, which was operated by a powerful negro. Since the daily circulation in 1848 was but about 2,000 copies, the black could turn off the edition without exhaustion. In the new home it was able to have a large power press. At first an effort was made to operate it

with one of the "caloric" engines which Ericsson had invented in 1835 and more recently perfected, but this was found inadequate, and one of Hoe's new "lightning" engines was installed. Inasmuch as the circulation steadily rose, as the size of the newspaper was increased, and as the weekly, following in the footsteps of Greeley's *Weekly Tribune,* became an important property, the improved press facilities were an absolute necessity.

But Bigelow's chief service to the counting room lay in his insistence upon an absolute change of business management. When the new building was purchased, the man who had succeeded Boggs as publisher, a practical printer of no education named Timothy A. Howe, was entrusted with refitting it, and his incompetence soon became plain. A belief that his general business capacity was small had been growing upon Bigelow, and he finally resolved that the existing state of affairs must end:

I sent word to Mr. Howe [Bigelow said late in life in an interview with Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard] that I wished he would meet me in Mr. Bryant's office at such an hour the following day, and when we met there, I said to them both that the business below stairs was not conducted to my satisfaction; that I did not see any prospect of its amendment under existing arrangements, and I felt that we needed another man in that department. That, if I remained in the concern, there must be another one in that department; that I did not wish to crowd Mr. Howe out, but I did not propose to stay in with him conducting the business, and that I was ready to name the figures at which I would either buy his share or sell my own if he was ready to do the same, but that it was the only condition upon which I could stay in. Well, Mr. Bryant did not look up at all—he hung his head. Howe was as pale as a sheet, and he stammered a little and looked at Mr. Bryant to see whether there was any comfort there, but he did not find any. After a few remarks in which I repeated my story. . . . Howe said, "Very well, I see that Mr. Bryant is with you in the matter, and I will go. . . . "

The result was that Isaac Henderson, who had come to the *Evening Post* in May, 1839, as a clerk at $7 a week, was placed in charge of the business side of the

paper; and in May, 1854, he bought one-third of it, of the building, and of the job office. He paid $17,083.33, agreeing further to give Howe six per cent. of the semi-annual dividends for the next five years. Whatever Henderson's faults, lack of shrewdness and industry was not among them. He pushed the circulation higher and higher, and was so capable in attracting advertisers that even during the panic of 1857 the columns were crowded. In June, 1858, the combined circulation of daily, weekly, and semi-weekly was 12,334 copies and was rapidly growing. "I never before knew what it was to have more money than I wanted to spend," Bigelow wrote his chief, who was then abroad. Cooper & Hewitt had stopped their advertising in consequence of articles about the shaky credit of the Atlantic Telegraph and the Illinois Central Railroad, in which this firm had large sums invested, but the *Post* could afford to laugh at that. The dividends for the year 1848 for the first time surpassed $45,000, and this golden prosperity was rapidly enhanced in 1859.

"A single circumstance will perhaps enable you to form as good an idea of how we stand as a sheet full of statistics," Bryant wrote Bigelow on April 11, 1859. "Mr. Henderson puts on a severe look in which satisfaction is mingled with resignation, and says quietly, 'The *Evening Post* is prosperous—very prosperous.' "

Indeed, Bigelow's investment of 1848-9 proved the cornerstone of a snug fortune. In 1860, a campaign year in which the circulation boomed again, the net income was no less than $68,774.23. That is, his share of the profits—he now owned a full third—was very decidedly more than the $17,100 which his part of the newspaper had cost him. Immediately after the election he offered Parke Godwin, who was seeking a place in the customs service, his interest in the newspaper for a price, as finally agreed upon, of $111,460—a bargain; and since he was willing to take a small cash payment, Godwin eagerly accepted. Bigelow later gave three reasons for his sudden decision to leave the *Evening Post*. By

the election of Lincoln the great free-soil cause seemed to have triumphed, and he felt that there was no public movement urgently needing his pen; he wanted leisure for deliberate literary work; and he believed that from a dozen years of journalism he had received all the intellectual nourishment it could give him. "In the twelve years that I had spent on the paper," he wrote, "I had managed to pay out of its earnings what it had cost me; I had lived very comfortably; I had purchased a country place of considerable value; I had had two trips to the West Indies, to which I devoted five or six months, and a tour in Europe with all my family, of nineteen months; and was able to retire with a property which could not be fairly valued at less than $175,000."

But before Bigelow severed his connection with the *Evening Post* he attempted one highly interesting service; he tried, with temporary success, to obtain the French critic Sainte-Beuve as a literary correspondent. He was in Europe from the last days of 1858 until the late spring of 1860. In his unpublished journal for Jan. 24, 1860, when he was staying in Paris, he records that he went at one o'clock to see Sainte-Beuve "and to conclude an agreement partially negotiated" on behalf of the newspaper. The great Frenchman, fifty-six years old, was at the height of his fame, having just been made commander of the Legion of Honor. If the rate of pay he was willing to consider from the *Evening Post* seems small, we must remember that he was busy with his "Causeries du Lundi" for the *Moniteur,* and that he probably thought he could re-use this material for the American journal. Bigelow offered him 125 francs, or about $25, for each letter, stipulating that Sainte-Beuve should pay the translator, who, Bigelow thought, ought to accept $5. Sainte-Beuve had already written and mailed his first letter, and he made no immediate demur to these terms. Next day, however, he wrote that his inquiries had convinced him that no good translator would do the work for less than $10, and that he could not go on. Bigelow at once increased his offer to $30 a letter, of which $20

was to go to Sainte-Beuve, but the critic persisted in his refusal. The compensation, he said, was adequate, but he was too old for such a burden as this would impose.

Sainte-Beuve's letter, filling two and a half columns with its 5,500 words, had meanwhile appeared in the *Evening Post*, under the heading "Literary Matters in France." The greater part was devoted to a beautifully written and fine critical disquisition upon the recently published correspondence of Béranger, but prefixed to this were several paragraphs of general comment. "French literature for some years past has produced nothing very new or brilliant," he wrote, "especially in the department of poetry. . . . But in the department of history, political and literary, and in that of erudition, good books and meritorious monographs have been written." Political events since 1848, he explained, had thrown many men into a retirement favorable to literary pursuits—Villemain, Guizot, Remusat, and Victor Cousin. In closing he alluded to the loss the Institut de France had suffered in Macaulay, and added: "The death of the illustrious Prescott had already deprived the same learned body of a corresponding member. It is thought that America will also provide the member to be named as Prescott's successor (*primo avulso non deficit alter*), and we are informed that some influential members of that academy have thought of Mr. Motley, whose admirable historical work has been recently introduced here by M. Guizot."

The article was not signed, and was not appreciated by a public which cared nothing about Béranger. Bryant grasped this general indifference. He wrote Bigelow that the letter was too long, and that Americans were not sufficiently familiar with French authors to have that craving for anecdotes of their lives, conversation, and correspondence which they had in the case of the distinguished names of English literature. He always distrusted an article his wife would not read, he said, and she would not read this. Probably short letters of not more than 2,000 words, sent not oftener than monthly,

and dealing with topics of wide interest, would—especially if signed by Sainte-Beuve—have been highly successful; it was unfortunate that Bigelow, when Sainte-Beuve indicated his reluctance to accept the heavy burden of long essays, did not suggest this solution. But the Civil War was at hand, and the columns of the paper were soon crowded to bursting.

Bigelow was appointed consul at Paris by President Lincoln soon after leaving the *Evening Post,* and in 1864 became Minister to France. From Paris during the war he wrote assiduously to Bryant, and was able to supply much information of editorial value regarding the French and British attitude toward the North. After returning to the United States, until Bryant's death, he not infrequently contributed to the editorial page, and twice refused an active connection with it. In 1880 he wrote Parke Godwin, then editor, making inquiries regarding the purchase of a share in the paper, with a view to becoming its head, but did not push them. His loss at a time of national crisis was keenly felt by the *Evening Post,* but his place was ably supplied by Parke Godwin and a newcomer, Charles Nordhoff.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HEATED POLITICS BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

THE history of the *Evening Post* for the decade following the Compromise of 1850 is summarized in the names of its greater political correspondents. Thomas Hart Benton, besides contributing much of his "Thirty Years' View," sent Bryant occasional memoranda for editorial use. Gideon Welles began contributing in 1848, when he was a bureau chief in the Navy Department, and Salmon P. Chase sent occasional unsigned contributions, and more frequent comments or suggestions. Both Benton and Welles had been as ardent Jacksonian Democrats as Bryant, and both were free-soilers; while Welles and Chase became founders of the Republican Party in Connecticut and Ohio respectively. The *Evening Post*, in other words, remained Democratic till early in Pierce's administration it found that Democracy was simply dancing to the pipings of the slavery nabobs, when it gave all its support to the rising Republican movement. It is evidence of its zeal in the new cause that Sumner, more an abolitionist than a free-soiler, became an ardent admirer of the paper. He wrote Bigelow expressing his "sincere delight" in it, saying that its political arguments "fascinate as well as convince." It was upon his recommendation that William S. Thayer, a brilliant young Harvard man, was employed, and became in the years 1856-60 the Washington correspondent whom the anti-slavery statesmen liked and trusted most.

In the sultry, ominous decade before the Civil War storm, there is a long list of events upon which the opinions of any great journal are of interest. What did the *Evening Post* think in 1850 of Webster's Seventh of March speech? How in 1852 did it regard the dismal contest between Pierce and Winfield Scott? What esti-

mate did it place upon "Uncle Tom's Cabin"? What in 1856 did it say of Brooks's assault upon Sumner, and of the fierce Buchanan-Fremont contest; and what the next year of the Dred Scott decision? How did Bryant express himself upon the crimes and martyrdom of "Osawatomie" Brown? Readers of an old file of newspapers for those tense years have a sense of sitting at a drama, waiting the approach of a catastrophe which they perfectly foresee, but which the players hope to the last will be avoided.

Bryant in the campaign of 1848 had bolted from the regular Democratic ticket along with the other "Barnburners" of New York. The nickname referred to the Dutchman who burned his barn to exterminate the rats, for they were accused of trying to destroy the party to get rid of slavery in the territories. It was impossible for the *Evening Post* to support the regulars' nominee, Lewis Cass, who had expressed pro-slavery views, or the Whig nominee, Gen. Zachary Taylor, who owned four hundred slaves. It predicted in June that Taylor would be elected by an enormous majority, and bitterly taunted Polk and the other pro-slavery Democrats because their Texan policy had given the Whigs, headed by the hero of Buena Vista, the Presidency. Its attitude was hostile to both the parties, but particularly to that which had betrayed the ideals of Jackson and Benton. The Barnburners nominated their candidate for the Presidency, Van Buren, at an enthusiastic August convention on the shores of Lake Erie, in Buffalo. The leaders were Bryant, Chase, Charles Francis Adams, Joshua R. Giddings, Preston King—an intimate friend of Bigelow's—and David Dudley Field. All these men knew they had no chance of victory, and Bryant frankly said as much. But the trumpet-blast of the convention, "We inscribe on our banner Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men," was echoed and reëchoed by the *Evening Post* till the day of election. The final appeal, on the day that 300,000 voters cast their ballots for Van Buren, shows how militant its position was:

Shall the great republic of the western hemisphere, the greatest which has yet blessed the anxious hope of nations, to which the eyes of millions, now engaged in a desperate struggle for emancipation in Europe, turn as their only encouragement and solace, the republic which was founded by Washington and nourished into vigor by Jefferson and Jackson—shall this republic make itself a byword and a reproach wherever its name is heard? Shall the United States no longer be known as the home of the free and the asylum of the oppressed, but as the hope of the slave and the oppressor of the poor?

All good men have an interest in answering these questions. But above all others, the laboring man has a deeper interest. The greatest disgrace inflicted upon labor is inflicted by the institution of slavery. Those who support it—we mean the negro-owners, or the negro-drivers of the South—openly declare that he who works with his hands is on the level with the slave. They cannot think otherwise, so long as they are educated under the influence of this dreadful injustice. It perverts all the true relations of society, and corrupts every humane and generous sentiment.

Welles published in the *Evening Post* after the election an unsigned article denouncing the tyranny of party allegiance, but Bryant's journal did not yet forsake Democracy. As a Democratic organ still it boasted that it published the party's widest-circulated weekly paper. As a Democratic organ it remarked of Polk, when he went out of office in 1849, that "such Presidents as he are only accidents, and two such accidents are not at all likely to be visited upon a single miserable generation"—an assertion which Pierce and Buchanan soon confuted. Bennett's *Herald,* with its instinct for the winning side, having climbed on the Taylor bandwagon, the *Evening Post* was for some years the only Democratic newspaper in this great Democratic city.

As a free-soil Democratic organ it opposed the Compromise of 1850, finding a peculiar relish in attacking any proposal originated by Clay, and supported by the equally distasteful Whig and protectionist, Webster. Like Chase and Welles, Bryant and Bigelow saw the plain objections to any compromise. The crisis had been precipitated by the demand for the admission of California, and the

question was whether this admission should be purchased by large concessions to the South, or—as the *Evening Post* maintained—demanded as a right. The chief proposals of Clay were that California should be admitted as free territory, that Territorial Governments be erected in the rest of the Mexican cession without any restriction upon slavery, that the slave trade be prohibited in the District of Columbia, and that a new and atrociously-framed law for the return of fugitive slaves be enacted.

Clay's action was courageous. Bryant wrote that he could not refuse admiration for his boldness in grappling thus frankly with a subject so full of difficulties, and that his statesmanlike directness contrasted refreshingly with the timidity of the Administration. But he called the Compromise a blanket poultice, to heal five wounds at once, when the common sense method was to dress each sore separately; and he opposed any effort to coax the free States into abandonment of a single principle. Besides Bryant's and Bigelow's editorials, the *Evening Post* published a 5,000 word argument by William Jay, son of John Jay, and called upon its readers to sign petitions. It specifically objected to the provision that Utah and New Mexico should be organized without any restriction against slavery, for this meant an abandonment of the Wilmot Proviso, which it had always supported. Some Northern advocates of the Compromise argued that the region was not adapted to plantations and that slavery would not be transferred thither anyway; but this view the *Post* derided, quoting Southern members of Congress to the contrary. It was equally opposed to the Fugitive Slave Act. When Calhoun argued that the South was being "suffocated," it showed that the occupied land in the slave States was about 280 million acres, and the unoccupied land about 395 million, while the whole area of the free States was only about 291 million acres.

Webster's Seventh of March speech in behalf of the Compromise aroused savage indignation among his Boston admirers, but it did not surprise the *Evening Post.*

The Washington correspondent wrote of the stir of satisfaction among the listening Southern Senators, of the gleam of exultation that played over the quizzical visage of Foote of Virginia. But Bryant had expected Webster's volte-face:

> It was as natural to suppose that he would do this, as that he would abandon, in the manner he has done, the doctrines of free trade, once maintained by him in their fullest extent, and, taking the money of the Eastern mill-owners, enrol himself as the champion of protection for the rest of his life. . . .
>
> Mr. Webster stands before the public as a man who has deserted the cause which he lately defended, deserted it under circumstances which force upon him the imputation of a sordid motive, deserted it when his apostasy was desired by the Administration, and immediately after an office had been conferred upon his son, to say nothing of what has been done by the Administration for his other relatives. It is but little more than two years since he declared himself the firmest of friends to the Wilmot Proviso, professing himself its original and invariable champion, and claiming its principles as Whig doctrine.

Such aspersions upon Webster's motives were as unfair as Whittier's bitter lament and denunciation in the poem "Ichabod," but the same righteous anger dictated both. As a hoax, the *Evening Post* published in its issue of May 21 glaring headlines, proclaiming: "GREAT MEETING IN BOSTON!!—Tremendous Excitement—DANIEL WEBSTER—Out in Favor of—Applying the Proviso to All the Territories!!—No Compromise in Massachusetts!!!" The news story below was an account from *Niles's Register* of Dec. 11, 1819, when the Missouri Compromise was pending, of Webster's speech at an anti-slavery meeting in Boston, in which he asserted that it was the constitutional duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in all territory not included in the thirteen original States. It strikingly exhibited the orator's inconsistency. The pro-slavery *Commercial* was angry, declaring that many New Yorkers had not noted the date 1819 and had been deceived. Clay's measures, following the death of President Taylor, were passed by Congress, but to the

end the *Evening Post* protested that no permanent compromise was possible. The issue was whether a slave-holding minority should have a share of the new territories equal to that of the anti-slavery majority. The answer was yes or no, for there could be no middle ground. "If an association is composed of twenty members and five insist upon having an equal voice in its affairs with the other fifteen, what compromise can there be? You must either grant what they ask or deny it."

It was not until the ambitious Douglas, in 1854, introduced the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and Pierce brought his Administration behind the measure, that the *Evening Post* found it impossible to continue its connection with the Democratic Party. The horror with which Bryant and Bigelow looked upon this enactment is easily understood. They had expected the great valley of the Platte as a matter of course to be settled as free soil, since it lay north of the Missouri Compromise line, 36′ 30″. It had been taken for granted, when proposals had been made to erect territories there, that slavery had once for all been excluded. But now Douglas, maintaining that the people in such regions should exercise their own choice for or against slavery, proposed to nullify the Missouri Compromise, and to create two territories, in which there should be no restrictions as to slavery, and in which the people should be perfectly free to regulate their "domestic institutions" as they saw fit. It was a body-blow to the North.

Franklin Pierce, a handsome, dashing young man of whose views no one knew very much, had been supported by the *Evening Post* in 1852, against Winfield Scott. James Ford Rhodes remarks that "The argument of the *Post,* that the Democratic candidate and platform were really more favorable to liberty than the Whig, was somewhat strained; the editor failed to look the situation squarely in the face." He was, however, acting in perfect harmony with the prominent New York Democrats who had, four years previously, bolted the regular nomination. Van Buren and his son, Preston King, Benton,

Cambreleng, and most of the paper's other free-soil friends were willing to take a chance upon Pierce. But he had not been in office four months before the *Evening Post* suspected his pro-slavery tendencies, and began to eye him with disfavor and alarm. Its utterances moved the Washington *Union* on July 5, 1853, and the Richmond *Enquirer* nine days later, to read it out of the Democratic party. "The *Evening Post* and the Buffalo *Republic* belong to that class of hangers-on to the Democratic party who sail under Democratic colors, but who are in reality the worst enemies of the party. They are abolitionists in fact," said the first-named sheet. The *Enquirer* wanted such newspapers to begone. "It is time that they should be spurned with indignation and scorn as the instruments and echoes of the worst factions of the day." Now, in February, 1854, when Pierce made it clear that he was supporting Douglas's plan for repudiating the Missouri Compromise, the *Evening Post* turned short and became the enemy of Democracy. An occasional Washington correspondent wrote with scorn of the renegade son of New Hampshire:

> It was reception day. We walked in unheralded, and soon found ourselves in the reception room, where Mr. Pierce was talking with a bevy of ladies. Immediately on seeing us he approached, received us very politely, and introduced us to Mrs. Pierce. The President impressed me better than I had expected, and better than most of his pictures. He had whitened out to the true complexion of a parlor knight—pale and soft looking. Though not what I should call elegant, his manners are easy and agreeable. He is more meek in appearance than he is usually represented, as might be expected of a man who has submitted to be drawn into the position of tail to Senator Douglas's kite. . . . The President evidently feels the Presidency thrilling every nerve and coursing every vein. He is so delighted with it that he is palpably falling into the delusion of supposing himself a possible successor to himself! Could fond self-conceit go further? Setting aside the inherent impossibility of the thing, on account of the inevitable discoveries which his elevation has involved; his mad and wicked adhesion to the Nebraska perfidy will settle his chances (Feb. 13).

The columns of the paper show that a great popular uprising was occurring in New York. It had recently contrasted the crowded, applauding houses, witnessing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" at the Chatham Street Theater, with the mob gathered at the Chatham Street Chapel in 1834 to attack negroes and abolitionists. In January, 1854, a great mass-meeting was held at the Tabernacle to protest against the Douglas bill. Bryant pointed out that it was composed of merchants, bankers, and professional men who had hitherto stubbornly opposed the abolitionist movement and had supported the Compromise of 1850. He noted also that the 80,000 Germans of the city were unanimous, like most other immigrant groups, for keeping the West open to free labor. The *Staats Zeitung* had supported Lewis Cass in 1848, the Compromise in 1850, and Pierce in 1852, yet now it was decidedly against the Pierce Administration, as were the three other German dailies.

Early on a March morning the Kansas-Nebraska Bill passed the Senate, amid the boom of cannon fired by Southern enthusiasts. When Chase walked down the Capitol steps he said to Sumner: "They celebrate a present victory, but the echoes they awake shall never rest until slavery itself shall die." From that moment the *Evening Post* treated slavery as a serpent upon which the nation must set its heel, and Democracy as its ally:

> The President has taken a course by which the greater part of this dishonor is concentrated upon the Democratic Party. Upon him and his Administration, and upon all the northern friends of the Nebraska Bill in Congress, and upon the Democratic Party who gave the present executive his power of mischief, the people will visit this great political sin of the day. . . . The result is inevitable; Seward is in the ascendancy in this State and the North generally; the Democratic Party has lost its moral strength in the free States; it is stripped of the respect of the people by the misconduct of those who claim to be its leaders, and whatever boast we may make of our excellent maxims of legislation and policy in regard to other questions, the deed of yesterday puts us in a minority for years to come. . . .

The admission of slavery into Nebraska is the preparation for yet other measures having in view the aggrandizement of the slave power—the wresting of Cuba from Spain to make several additional slave States; the creation of yet other slave States, in the territory acquired from Mexico, and the renewal of the African slave trade. These things are contemplated; the Southern journals already speak of them as familiarly and flippantly as they do of an ordinary appropriation bill, and who shall say they are not already at our door?

The bitterness and militancy of the *Evening Post* thenceforth increased day by day. The recapture of the slave Burns in Boston during the summer of 1854, the slave whom Thomas Wentworth Higginson tried at the head of a mob to rescue, and who was marched to the wharf by platoons of soldiers and police through a crowd of fifty thousand hissing people, moved the *Evening Post* to call the Fugitive Slave law "the most ruffianly act ever authorized by a deliberative assembly." Month after month it exhorted the North to send emigrants to Kansas and Nebraska to uphold the free-soil cause. It invited Southerners to stay at their own watering-places in summer. It taunted the South with its lack of literature and culture, declaring that the only Southern book yet written which would not perish was Benton's "Thirty Years' View," a free-soiler's work. In the State election of 1855 it supported the Republican ticket, and when "Prince" John Van Buren attacked it for doing so, it assailed him in turn as the "degenerate son" of a great father. As 1855 closed with fresh news every day of bloodshed in the territories, the paper cried its encouragement to those who fought for free soil:

Every liberal sentiment—the love of freedom, the hatred of oppression, the detestation of fraud, the abhorrence of wrong cloaked under the guise of law—every feeling of the human heart which does not counsel cowardly submission and the purchase of present safety as the price of future evils, takes part with the residents of Kansas. They may commit imprudent acts, they may be rash . . . but their cause is a great and righteous cause, and we must stand by it to the last.

It was a foregone conclusion at the beginning of 1856 that the *Evening Post* would lend energetic assistance to the half-organized Republican party. During the previous summer and autumn it had devoted several editorials to the disintegration of the Whig party in both sections, and to that of the Democratic party at the North. The time had come, it said, when the old party names meant nothing upon the principal issues, and it welcomed the formation of a new party of definite tenets. Bigelow, more impetuous than Bryant, made the *Evening Post* an energetic champion of Fremont more than a month before the Republicans nominated him for the Presidency. Even the *Tribune* was held back until later by the doubts of Greeley's lieutenant, Pike, so that the *Post* was one of the first powerful Northern sheets for him.

To Bigelow it was that Nathaniel P. Banks, just elected Speaker of the House and the foremost advocate of Fremont, addressed himself when he came to New York city in February, 1856. Banks sensibly held that some one was needed to typify free-soil principles, and that the people would never join a party en masse until a man stood at the head of it; while he believed that Fremont was the ideal chieftain. It happened that Fremont was then at the Metropolitan Hotel, on the site of Niblo's Garden, and Banks took Bigelow to call. The sub-editor was favorably impressed. He gathered a conference of free-soil leaders at his home, including the venerable Frank P. Blair, well remembered as a member of Jackson's kitchen cabinet; Samuel J. Tilden; Edwin P. Morgan, later Governor and Senator; and Edward Miller. All save Tilden favored Fremont, and Blair, at Bigelow's instance, undertook to obtain Senator Benton's endorsement of his son-in-law. As early as April 10, 1856, the *Evening Post's* editorials showed a marked leaning toward him, and on May 18 (he was nominated on June 19) it began publishing his biography.

Throughout that campaign the *Evening Post*, the *Tribune*, *Times*, *Courier*, and the German press of the city battled against the "Buchaneers," represented by the

Journal of Commerce, Commercial, Express, and *Daily News.* Bigelow offered two prizes of $100 each for the best campaign songs in English and German, and the *Post* made special low subscription rates. When Fremont was defeated that fall, it consoled itself not only by the startling strength the Republicans displayed, polling 1,341,264 votes, against 1,838,169 for Buchanan, but by the stinging defeat which Pierce, Cass, and Douglas, so subservient to the South, saw their friends suffer in New Hampshire, Michigan, and Illinois. Bryant exulted:

> We have at least laid the basis of a formidable and well-organized party, in opposition to the spread of slavery—that scheme which is the scandal of the country and the age. In those States of the Union which have now given such large majorities for Fremont, public opinion, which till lately has been shuffling and undecided in regard to the slavery question, is now clear, fixed, and resolute. If we look back to 1848, when we conducted a Presidential election on this very ground of opposition to the spread of slavery, we shall see that we have made immense strides towards the ascendancy which, if there be any grounds to hope for the perpetuity of free institutions, is yet to be ours. We were then comparatively weak, we are now strong; we then counted our thousands, we now count our millions; we could then point to our respectable minorities in a few States, we now point to State after State. . . . The cause is not going back—it is going rapidly forward; the free-soil party of 1848 is the nucleus of the Republican party of 1856; but with what accessions of numbers, of moral power, of influence, not merely in public assemblies, but at the domestic fireside!

The *Evening Post* was now as firmly a "black Republican" organ as the *Tribune,* and far more radical in tone than Henry J. Raymond's *Times.* When in May, 1856, Brooks of South Carolina beat Sumner into insensibility at his desk in the Senate Chamber, it saw in the episode no mere flash of Southern hotheadedness, but evidence of a deep and consistent menace. It was a "base assault," a bit of "cowardly brutality." "Are we, too, slaves—slaves for life, a target for their brutal blows, when we

do not comport ourselves to please them?" But Bryant looked below the symptom to its cause:

> Violence reigns in the streets of Washington . . . violence has now found its way into the Senate chamber. Violence lies in wait on all the navigable rivers and all the railways of Missouri, to obstruct those who pass from the free States into Kansas. Violence overhangs the frontiers of that territory like a storm-cloud charged with hail and lightning. Violence has carried election after election in that territory. . . . In short, violence is the order of the day; the North is to be pushed to the wall by it, and this plot will succeed if the people of the free States are as apathetic as the slaveholders are insolent.

Already the *Evening Post* had fitful glimpses of the furnace into which this violence was leading. Under the heading, "A Short Method with Disunionists," Bryant (Sept. 26, 1855) had said that secession must be throttled as Jackson throttled it in South Carolina. The newspaper already regarded slavery as an evil to be stamped out altogether, though it did not quite say so. Gov. Wise of Virginia deplored the failure to open up California as a slave market. Bryant explained this by pointing out that the natural increase of Virginia's black population exceeded 23,000 souls a year, which at $1,000 each came to more than $23,000,000. The annual production of wheat in Virginia had by the last census been worth only $11,000,000. Since the extension of the slave market to Texas had doubled the price of negroes, it was no wonder that Virginia wished it pushed to the Pacific. "Such a state of things may be very proper if the duty and destiny of this great country are to breed slaves and hunt runaway human cattle. But how incompatible with a genuine Christian civilization! How it moves the pride and curls the lip of European despotism! How it strikes down the power and crushes the hopes of the struggling friends of freedom all over the world!"

The excitement produced by the Dred Scott decision in March, 1857, is evinced by the fact that upon eight successive days the *Evening Post* devoted a leading or an

important editorial to Chief Justice Taney's opinion. It was not unexpected: the paper had uttered angry words in 1855 over a decision by a lower court foreshadowing it. But, opening all Territories North and South to slavery, it seemed intolerable. Bryant, on the point of sailing for Europe, took the view that in fact it was so intolerable the American people would never accept its practical implications. He believed the opinion of the court so superficial and shallow that it would be respected nowhere, and compared Chief Justice Taney's legal knowledge disparagingly with that shown by a colored keeper of an oyster cellar in Baltimore who had corrected some of his historical misinformation. Northerners regarded the situation with the greater alarm because Buchanan's Administration, just entering office, was entirely committed to the slavery party, the President accepting Southern Cabinet members like Howell Cobb of Georgia and Jacob Thompson of Mississippi as his chief advisers. Bryant hinted his suspicion of a treasonable conspiracy between Chief Justice Taney and these Southern leaders. A new eloquence was animating the words in which he wrote of slavery:

> Hereafter, if this decision shall stand for law, slavery, instead of being what the people of the slave States have hitherto called it, their peculiar institution, is a Federal institution, the common patrimony and shame of all the States, those which flaunt the title of free, as well as those which accept the stigma of being the Land of Bondage; hereafter, wherever our jurisdiction extends, it carries with it the chain and the scourge—wherever our flag floats, it is the flag of slavery. If so, that flag should have the light of the stars and the streaks of running red erased from it; it should be dyed black, and its device should be the whip and the fetter.
>
> Are we to accept, without question, these new readings of the Constitution—to sit down contentedly under this disgrace—to admit that the Constitution was never before rightly understood, even by those who framed it—to consent that hereafter it shall be the slaveholders' instead of the freemen's Constitution? Never! Never! We hold that the provisions of the Constitution, so far as they regard slavery, are now just what they were when it was

framed, and that no trick of interpretation can change them. The people of the free States will insist on the old impartial construction of the Constitution, adopted in calmer times—the construction given it by Washington and his contemporaries, instead of that invented by modern politicians in Congress and adopted by modern politicians on the bench.

But in the territory of Kansas the decision for freedom was already being made by force of arms. Bryant and Bigelow had never ceased urging the dispatch of Northern settlers and breech-loading rifles to the Western plains. The poet had written his brother (Feb. 15, 1856) that the city was alive with the excitement of the Kansas news, and subscribing liberally to the Emigrants' Aid Society. "The companies of emigrants will be sent forward as soon as the rivers and lakes are opened—in March, if possible—and by the first of May there will be several thousand more free-state settlers in Kansas than there now are. Of course they will go well armed." After election day that fall he had proposed that the Republican campaign organization be kept functioning to speed the flow of settlers. The *Tribune* was simultaneously declaring that "The duty of the people of the free States is to send more true men, more Sharpe's rifles, and more howitzers to Kansas." Henry Ward Beecher, attending a meeting at which a deacon asked arms for seventy-nine men, declared that a Sharpe's rifle was a greater moral agency than the Bible, and that Plymouth Church would furnish half the guns required; whence the familiar nickname, "Beecher's Bibles." Even Henry J. Raymond and the *Times*, in spite of their policy of not hurting Southern sensibilities, saw that the issue on the Platte must be fought out.

A letter from Osawatomie, Kansas, gave a vivid picture in the *Evening Post* of July 14, 1856, of the perils of the free-soil settlement there, and asked for funds sufficient to keep thirty or forty horsemen in the field, well mounted and armed with breechloading rifles, Colt's revolvers, and sabers. Other pleas were backed by editorials. A month after the Dred Scott decision a cor-

respondent writing from Leavenworth told how the North had rallied to meet the crisis. "Emigration to Kansas and Nebraska has now set in with wonderful vigor, and such force as none have anticipated. Every train from Boston and New York to St. Louis is crowded to excess. More boats are running on the Missouri River than ever before, yet all are crowded. I have been nearly a week on the river and have slept on the cabin floor every night, with some hundred of other bed- or rather floor-fellows, being unable to get a stateroom. It is estimated that 7,000 Kansas emigrants have landed at Kansas City since the opening of navigation, and thousands more have gone on to Wyandotte, Quindaro, Leavenworth, etc. . . . And still they come. A single party of a thousand persons was expected in St. Louis last Tuesday." The later correspondence had an equally confident note, which was justified when in October the free-soilers swept the Territorial election.

When the pro-slavery legislators that autumn, faced with the loss of their control, hastily drew up the Lecompton Constitution, providing for the establishment and perpetuation of slavery, the *Evening Post* attacked them angrily. Its fear was that the Buchanan Administration would induce Congress, which was Democratic in both branches, to admit Kansas under this illegal instrument. Thayer, its Washington correspondent, wrote that the Administration leaders were employing bribery to that end. The protests of the *Evening Post* day in and day out contributed to the overwhelming Northern sentiment which made this fraud impossible.

While the *Herald, Journal of Commerce,* and *Express* were filled with horror by John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry in the closing days of 1859, the *Evening Post* pointed to it as a just retribution upon the South for its own crimes. Douglas believed and said that the raid was the natural result of the teachings of the Republican party; Bryant believed it the natural result of that Southern violence which he had excoriated after Brooks's assault upon Sumner. His editorials almost recall John

Brown's own favorite text: "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins." Of course, he condemned the lawlessness of the act, but he did not believe Brown solely responsible:

> Passion does not reason; but if Brown reasoned and desired to give a public motive to his personal rancors, he probably said to himself that "the slave drivers had tried to put down freedom in Kansas by force of arms, and he would try to put down slavery by the same means." Thus the bloody instructions which they taught return to plague the inventors. They gave, for the first time in the history of the United States, an example of the resort to arms to carry out political schemes, and, dreadful as the retaliation is which Brown has initiated, must take their share of the responsibility. They must remember that they accustomed men, in their Kansas forays, to the idea of using arms against their political opponents, that by their crimes and outrages they drove hundreds to madness, and that the feelings of bitterness and revenge thus generated have since rankled in the heart. Brown has made himself an organ of these in a fearfully significant way.

The evident terror many Southerners had of a slave insurrection filled Bryant with scorn. Buchanan wished to acquire Cuban and northern Mexico, and Southern newspapers wished Africa opened and new millions of blacks poured in; slavery was a blessed institution, and we could not have too much of it! "But while they speak the tocsin sounds, the blacks are in arms, their houses are in flames, their wives and children driven into exile or killed, and a furious servile war stretches its horrors over years. That is the blessed institution you ask us to foster, and spread, and worship, and for the sake of which you even spout your impotent threats against the grand edifice of the Union!" Pending the trial there was much interest in Brown's carpet-bag. The *Evening Post* said that its incendiary contents were probably Washington's will, emancipating his slaves; his letter of 1786 to Lafayette expressing hope that slavery would be abolished; Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, deploring slavery; his project of 1785 for emancipating the slaves; and similar documents by Patrick Henry, John

Randolph, and Monroe. Bryant's utterance when John Brown was hanged recalls that of our other great men of letters. Emerson spoke of Brown as "that new saint awaiting his martyrdom"; Thoreau called him "an angel of light"; Longfellow jotted in his diary, "The date of a new revolution, quite as much needed as the old one." Bryant wrote:

> . . . History, forgetting the errors of his judgment in the contemplation of his unfaltering courage, of his dignified and manly deportment in the face of death, and of the nobleness of his aims, will record his name among those of its martyrs and heroes.

Meanwhile, a new figure had arisen in the West. Like most other New York journals the *Evening Post* had instantly perceived the significance of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. When they began it remarked that Illinois was the theater of the most momentous contest, whether one considered the eminence of the contestants or the consequences which might result from it, that had occurred in any State canvass since Silas Wright's defeat for Governor in 1846. When they closed it remarked (Oct. 18): "No man of this generation has grown more rapidly before the country than Mr. Lincoln in this canvass."

At first the paper's reports of the Lincoln-Douglas addresses were taken from the Chicago press, but it soon had its own correspondent, Chester P. Dewey, following the debaters. This writer knew Lincoln's capacity. "Poor, unfriended, uneducated, a day laborer, he has distanced all these disadvantages, and in the profession of the law has risen steadily to a competence, and to the position of an intelligent, shrewd, and well-balanced man," ran his characterization. "Familiarly known as 'Long Abe,' he is a popular speaker, and a cautious, thoughtful politician, capable of taking a high position as a statesman and legislator." He described the enthusiasm with which Lincoln's supporters at Ottawa carried him from the grounds on their shoulders. He related how at Jonesboro, in the southern extremity of the State,

where the crowd was overwhelmingly Democratic, Douglas came to the grounds escorted by a band and a cheering crowd, amid the discharges of a brass cannon, while Lincoln arrived with only a few friends; how when Lincoln arose "a faint cheer was elicited, followed by derisive laughter from the Douglas men"; but how he quite won his audience.

It is interesting to note that this correspondent grasped the full importance of the Freeport debate, where Lincoln asked Douglas whether the people of a territory could themselves exclude slavery from it. To answer "no" meant that Douglas repudiated his doctrine of squatter sovereignty, and to answer "yes" meant that he alienated the South. On Sept. 5 the *Evening Post* had published a long editorial in which it concluded that Douglas was likely to be the Southern candidate in 1860. Just two days later its correspondent foretold the effect of Douglas's fatal "yes" at Freeport:

> It was very evident that Mr. Douglas was cornered by the questions put to him by Mr. Lincoln. He claimed to be the upholder of the Dred Scott decision, and also of popular sovereignty. He was asked to reconcile the two. . . .
>
> When the Freeport speech of Mr. Douglas shall go forth to all the land, and be read by the men of Georgia and South Carolina, their eyes will doubtless open. Can they . . . abet a man who avows these revolutionary sentiments and endorses the right to self-government of the people of a territory? . . . How would he appear uttering this treason of popular sovereignty at a South Carolina barbecue?

Lincoln had been anxious to visit New York, and on Feb. 27, 1860, through the invitation of the Young Men's Central Republican Union, he made his great speech at Cooper Institute. Bryant presided. The poet had met Lincoln nearly thirty years before, when, on his first visit to Illinois, he had encountered a company of volunteers going forward to the Black Hawk War, and had been attracted by the racy, original conversation of the uncouth young captain; but this meeting he had forgotten. James

A. Briggs, who made all the business arrangements for Lincoln's speech, later told in the *Evening Post* (Aug. 16, 1867) some interesting facts concerning the occasion. It was Briggs who personally asked Bryant to preside. The fame of the Westerner had, although the jealous *Times*, a Seward organ, spoke of him as merely "a lawyer who had some local reputation in Illinois," impressed every one. In its two issues preceding the 27th the *Evening Post* published prominent announcements of Lincoln's arrival and of the meeting, and promised "a powerful assault upon the policy and principles of the pro-slavery party, and an able vindication of the Republican creed." The hall was well filled. According to Briggs, the tickets were twenty-five cents each, and the receipts, in spite of many free admissions, $367, or just $17 in excess of the expenses, of which the fee to Lincoln represented $200. As the *Tribune* said, since the days of Clay and Webster no man had spoken to a larger body of the city's culture and intellect.

Bryant, in his brief introductory speech, said that it was a grateful office to present such an eminent Western citizen; that "these children of the West form a living bulwark against the advance of slavery, and from them is recruited the vanguard of the mighty armies of liberty" (loud applause); and that he had only to pronounce the name of the great champion of Republicanism in Illinois, who would have won the victory two years before but for an unjust apportionment law, to secure the profoundest attention. The *Evening Post* reported that at the end of Lincoln's speech the audience arose almost to a man, and expressed its approbation by the most enthusiastic applause, the waving of handkerchiefs and hats, and repeated cheers. It reproduced the address in full, saying editorially that when it had such a speech it was tempted to wish its columns indefinitely elastic, emphasizing Lincoln's principal points, and praising highly the logic of the argument, its mastery of clear and impressive statement, and the originality of the closing passages. Briggs tells us that Lincoln read this eulogistic editorial:

After the return of Mr. Lincoln to New York from the East, where he had made several speeches, he said to me: "I have seen what all the New York papers said about that thing of mine in the Cooper Institute, with the exception of the New York *Evening Post,* and I would like to know what Mr. Bryant thought of it"; and he then added: "It is worth a visit from Springfield, Illinois, to New York to make the acquaintance of such a man as William Cullen Bryant." At Mr. Lincoln's request I sent him a copy of the *Evening Post,* with a notice of his lecture.

Raymond and the *Times,* when the Republican national convention met in Chicago on May 16, 1860, were ardently for Seward—indeed, Thurlow Weed and Raymond were Seward's chief lieutenants there. Greeley, had he been able to make the nomination himself, would have chosen Bates of Missouri first, and anybody to beat Seward second. Bryant, up to the time of the Cooper Union speech, had supported Chase for the nomination, but he knew that his chances were slight and he now leaned toward Lincoln—for he also was anxious to see Seward beaten. The *Evening Post's* dislike of Seward dated from 1853, when it had declared (Nov. 2) that his friends in the Whig Party and a Democratic faction had formed a corrupt combination to plunder the State treasury through contracts. Its bitterness against him had steadily increased during the years of his close association with the political boss, Thurlow Weed. No one believed that Seward was dishonest, but thousands thought that Weed's methods were detestable, and that Seward's intimacy with men who schemed for public grants was altogether too close. References to the connection between "Seward's chances" and "New York street railroads" had become common in 1859. Bryant wrote his associate Bigelow on Dec. 14 that, much as Seward had been hurt by the misconstruction of his phrase "the irrepressible conflict," he had been damaged more in New York by something else. "I mean the project of Thurlow Weed to give charters for a set of city railways, for which those who receive them are to furnish a fund of from four to six hundred thousand dollars, to be ex-

pended for the Republican cause in the next Presidential election." He added on Feb. 20:

> Mr. Seward is not without his chance of a nomination, though some of your friends here affirm that he has none. He is himself, I hear, very confident of getting it. While the John Brown excitement continued, his prospects improved, for he was the best-abused man of his party—now that he is let alone, his stock declines again and people talk of other men. For my part I do not see that he is more of a representative man than a score of others in our party. The great difficulty which I have in regard to him is this, that by the election of a Republican President the slavery question is settled, and that with Seward for President, it will be the greatest good luck, a special and undeserved favor of Providence, if every honest Democrat of the Republican party be not driven into the opposition within a twelvemonths after he enters the White House. There are bitter execrations of Weed and his friends passing from mouth to mouth among the old radical Democrats of the Republican party here.

Bigelow, writing home from London (March 20), saw in Lincoln the only hope of the party. He had no use for Seward; he had even less for Bates—"an old Clay Whig from Missouri . . . who has been for two years or more the candidate of Erastus Brooks and Gov. Hunt, who is not only not a Republican but who is put forward because he is not a Republican, and whom the *Tribune* recommends because he can get some votes that a straight-out Republican cannot get." Moreover, Bigelow saw "no possibility of nominating Fessenden, or Chase, or Banks, or any such man"; and he knew that unless the right kind of Republican was elected the fight was lost.

Lincoln's nomination was therefore hailed with more real gratification by the *Post* than by any other great Eastern newspaper. It saw in him one who would call forth the enthusiasm of his party, and the attachment of independent voters. The popular approval had already been surprising in its volume and gusto. "The Convention could have made no choice, we think, which, along with so many demonstrations of ardent approval, would have

been met with so few expressions of dissent." It paused to point out the two reasons for Seward's defeat. The first was the convention's opinion, with which it was inclined to agree, that he could not be elected, because he could not have carried Pennsylvania, Douglas would have beaten him in Illinois, and he was weak in Ohio, Indiana, and Vermont; the second lay in the distrust of his warmest political friends excited by the corruption of the two last New York legislatures. At this time there was much talk about "representative men," and the *Post,* after naming a few, remarked that Lincoln surpassed them all as a personification of the distinctive genius of our country and its institutions. "Whatever is peculiar in the history and development of America, whatever is foremost in its civilization, whatever is good in its social and political structure, finds its best expression in the career of such men as Abraham Lincoln."

A vignette of Lincoln by one of Bryant's friends then traveling in the West, George Opdyke, was immediately printed to disprove the current story that he dwelt in "the lowest hoosier style":

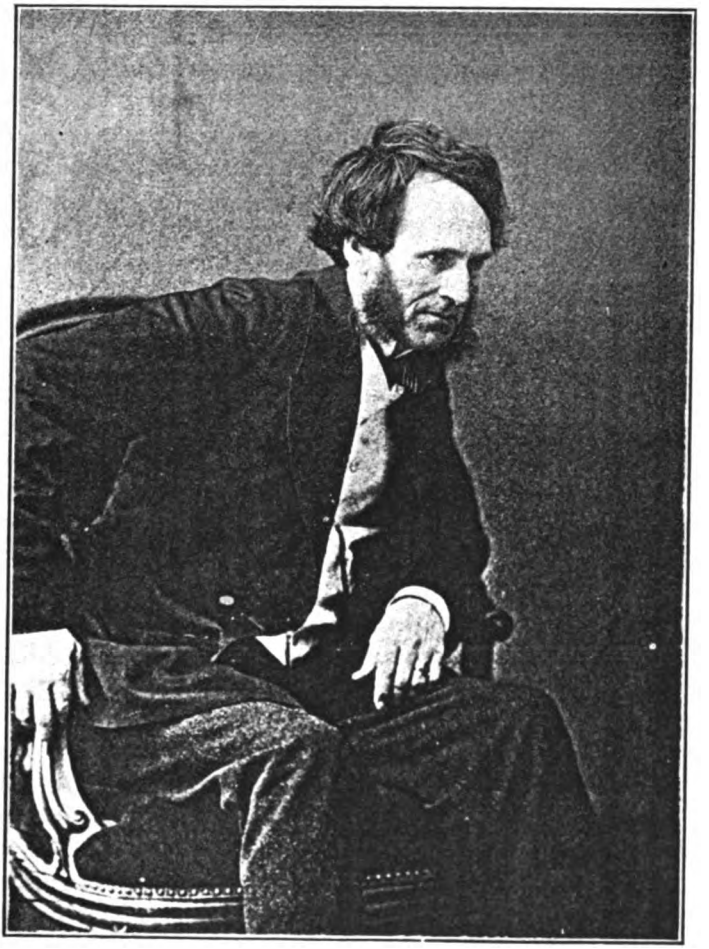
I found Mr. Lincoln living in a handsome, but not pretentious, double two-story frame house, having a wide hall running through the center, with parlors on both sides, neatly but not ostentatiously furnished. It was just such a dwelling as a majority of the well-to-do residents of these fine western towns occupy. Everything about it had a look of comfort and independence. The library I remarked in passing, particularly, and I was pleased to see long rows of books, which told of the scholarly tastes and culture of the family.

Lincoln received us with great, and to me surprising, urbanity. I had seen him before in New York, and brought with me an impression of his awkward and ungainly manner; but in his own house, where he doubtless feels himself freer than in the strange New York circles, Lincoln had thrown this off, and appeared easy, if not graceful. He is, as you know, a tall lank man, with a long neck, and his ordinary movements are unusually angular, even out west. As soon, however, as he gets interested in conversation, his face lights up, and his attitudes and gestures assume a certain dignity and impressiveness. His conversation is fluent,

agreeable, and polite. You see at once from it that he is a man of decided and original character. His views are all his own; such as he has worked out from a patient and varied scrutiny of life, and not such as he has obtained from others. Yet he cannot be called opinionated. He listens to others like one eager to learn. And his replies evince at the same time both modesty and self-reliance. I should say that sound common sense was the principal quality of his mind, although at times a striking phrase or word reveals a peculiar vein of thought.

At first, it is interesting to note, the *Evening Post* was not only all confidence in Lincoln's election, but all contempt for the Southern threats of secession if he won. Until that fall it held to a short-sighted view that the secession talk was a mere repetition of the old Southern attempt, made so often since nullification days, to bully the North as a spoiled child bullies its nurse. This confidence, which the *Times* and *Tribune* fully shared, was not assumed for campaign reasons. The stock market sustained it, and Bryant pointed to the midsummer advance in security prices as showing that business was not alarmed. A correspondent wrote from Newport on Aug. 23 that visitors from all parts of the South were there, but no fire-eating disunionists among them; "they deplore the election of Lincoln, while they regard it as almost a certainty, but scout the idea of secession or rebellion as a necessary consequence of it." For years the North had listened to bullying, blustering, and threats from the South, and it had grown too much used to menaces.

But in the final fortnight of the campaign the newspaper began to perceive that there was a sullen reality behind these fulminations. On Oct. 20 we find the first editorial to treat secession earnestly, one declaring that no government could parley with men in arms against its authority, and that like Napoleon dealing with the insurrectionaries of Paris, the United States "must fire cannon balls and not blank cartridges." On Oct. 29 it charged the existence of a definite secession conspiracy. Its authors were Howell Cobb and other officers high in the Administration; moreover, it declared, "the eggs of the



JOHN BIGELOW
Associate Editor 1849-1860.

conspiracy now hatching were laid four years ago, in the Cincinnati Convention." Bigelow at that time, a close observer at Cincinnati of the scenes amid which Buchanan was nominated, had declared (June 13, 1856) that the nomination was purchased from the South by a promise from one of Buchanan's lieutenants, Col. Samuel Black, that if a radical Republican should be elected his successor in 1860, then Buchanan would do nothing to interfere with the secession of the Southern States.

A few days before election, Samuel J. Tilden, who was supporting Douglas, came into the office of the *Evening Post* in high excitement. In Bigelow's room were seated the Collector of the Port, Hiram Barney; the president of the Illinois Central, William H. Osborn, and one of the commissioners of Central Park. They were all confident of Lincoln's election, and Tilden's excitement rose as he saw them rejoicing in the certainty. With a repressed anger and dignity that sobered them, he cut short their chaffing by saying: "I would not have the responsibility of William Cullen Bryant and John Bigelow for all the wealth in the sub-treasury. If you have your way, civil war will divide this country, and you will see blood running like water in the streets of this city." With these words, he left. On Oct. 30 the *Evening Post* devoted more than six columns to a letter by Tilden, in which he explained why, though long a free-soiler, he had not supported Lincoln. He declared that the Republican Party was a sectional party, that if it ruled at Washington the South would be virtually under foreign domination, and that the Southerners would never yield to its "impracticable and intolerable" policy. The *Post* replied to but one of his arguments. The Republican Party, it said, was sectional only because it had never been given a fair hearing at the South. But, it added, "We do not propose to review Mr. Tilden's paper at length to-day; a logical and conclusive answer to all its positions is in the course of preparation, and will appear in the *Evening Post* just one week from to-morrow afternoon."

On the day announced, the day after election, the *Evening Post* published a table of the electoral votes, by which it appeared that Lincoln had a certain majority of thirty-five and a possible majority of forty-two; heading it, "Reply to the Letter of Samuel J. Tilden, Continued and Concluded." But Tilden's prophecy was to be realized in a fashion the editors little expected.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE NEW YORK PRESS AND SOUTHERN SECESSION

No other five months in our history under the Constitution have been so critical as the five between the election of Lincoln and the capture of Sumter. The anger of the South at the Republican triumph; the secession of South Carolina before Christmas, followed by the rest of the lower South; the erection of a Southern Confederacy in February, with the choice of Davis as provisional President; the complete paralysis of Buchanan's government—all this made the months anxious and uncertain beyond any others in the century. Until New Year's, many people in the North believed that the Southern threats were not to be taken seriously; until February, many believed that the outlook for a peaceful preservation of the Union was bright. Thereafter a large part of the population held that, in Gen. Winfield Scott's phrase, the erring sisters should be let depart in peace. In this anomalous period a thousand currents of opinion possessed the land, and no one could predict what the next day would bring forth. The time tried the judgment and patriotism of the nation's newspapers as by fire.

The New York press had at this time asserted a national ascendancy which it slowly lost after the war as the great West increased in population. During December, 1860, the *Herald* averaged a week-day circulation of 77,107, and a Sunday circulation of 82,656, which it boasted was the largest in the world. The daily circulation of the London *Times* was 25,000 less. The *Tribune* boasted on April 10, 1861, that while its daily circulation was 55,000, its weekly circulation was enormous, making the total number of its buyers 287,750. Two-fifths of these were in New York, but it had 26,091 subscribers in Pennsylvania; 24,900 in Ohio; 16,477 in

Illinois; 11,968 in Iowa; 11,081 in Indiana, and even in California 5,535. In the South, on the other hand, there was a mere handful of buyers—21 in Mississippi, 23 in South Carolina, 35 in Georgia, and 10 in Florida, against 10,589 in Maine. The *Sun* had a daily circulation of about 60,000, and the *Times* of about 35,000. That of the *Evening Post* was approaching 20,000, while its weekly and semi-weekly issues were widely read in the West. It was in reference to the influence of the *Tribune, Times,* and *Evening Post* that the *Herald* said, "Without New York journalism there would have been no Republican party." It had some excuse for its boast regarding the city's journals (Nov. 8):

> Several of them, possessing revenues equal in amount to those of some of the sovereign States, are unapproachable by influences except those of a national policy, and they constitute a congress of intellect in permanent session assembled. The telegraph and the locomotive carry their influences to the remotest corners of the land in a constantly increasing ratio. These, then, are to be the leading powers which are to range parties, and conduct the discussions of the great questions of the generation that is before us. They, and they only, can do it in a catholic and cosmopolitan spirit . . . These affect the affairs and hopes of men everywhere.

Lincoln's election was accepted with unmixed pleasure by the *Evening Post* and *Tribune,* the *Times* and the *World,* which saw in it a long-deferred assurance that the popular majority in favor of freedom had at last found a dependable leader. It was accepted with resignation by the three chief opposition newspapers. Bennett's *Herald,* with a snort of chagrin, reminded good citizens that they should "settle down to their occupations and to discharge the duty which they owe to their families." The *Journal of Commerce* remarked that "we have nothing to do but submit," adding that the conservative majority in both Houses "will check any wayward fancies that may seize the executive, under the influence of his abolition advisers." The *Express* deplored, deeply deplored, the result, but formally acquiesced in it, "as under

the forms if not in the spirit and intent of the Constitution." But as the news of the secession movement increased, the differences of opinion grew marked.

Bryant in the *Evening Post* was anxious that Lincoln should not talk of concessions, nor seem to be frightened by the Southern bluster. He must refuse to parley with disunionists:

> If there are any States disposed to question the supremacy of the Constitution, or to assert the incompatibility of our climatic influences and social institutions with the form of government under which we have been hitherto united, now is the time to meet the question and settle it. . . .
>
> Mr. Lincoln cannot say one word or take one step toward concession of any kind without in so far striking at the very foundations upon which our government is based, violating the confidence of his supporters, and converting our victory into a practical defeat.
>
> When the idea of resisting the will of the majority is abandoned in responsible quarters; when every sovereign State shows itself content to abide the issue of a constitutional election, it will be time enough for Mr. Lincoln to enlighten those who need light as to what he will do and what he will not do; and we greatly mistake the man if he will give ear to any proposition designed to convert him into a President not of the whole Union, nor of those who voted for him, but of those who did not.

The *Herald* was equally insistent that Lincoln should promise concessions; "he should at once give to the world the programme of the policy he will pursue as President, and that policy should be one of conciliation," it said on Nov. 9. But a special correspondent of the *Post*, interviewing Lincoln in Springfield on Nov. 14, and finding him reading the history of the nullification movement, obtained an assurance that he would make no such sign of weakness. "I know," he quoted Lincoln as saying, "the justness of my intentions, and the utter groundlessness of the pretended fears of the men who are filling the country with their clamor. If I go into the Presidency, they will find me as I am on record—nothing less, nothing more. My declarations have been made to the world

without reservation. They have been repeated; and now, self-respect demands of me and the party that has elected me, that when threatened I should be silent." The correspondent assured Lincoln's Eastern friends that nature had endowed him "with that sagacity, honesty, and firmness which made Old Hickory's the most eminently successful and honorable Administration known to the public."

When South Carolina carried her threat of secession into execution on Dec. 20, every New York newspaper had already indicated its attitude toward that act. Bryant had done so Nov. 12, in an editorial called "Peaceable Secession an Absurdity." No government could have a day of assured existence, he wrote, if it tolerated the doctrine of peaceable secession, for it could have no credit or future. "No, if a State secedes it is in rebellion, and the seceders are traitors. Those who are charged with the executive branch of the government are recreant to their oaths if they fail to use all lawful means to put down such rebellion." The next day he added that "We look to Abraham Lincoln to restore American unity, and make it perpetual." No one expected Buchanan to do anything, and not a week passed without Bryant or Bigelow calling him a traitor. This insistence that the seceding States be coerced into returning was shared by the *World*, which was on the point of absorbing Webb's *Courier and Equirer*, and by the *Times*.

A far less sound view was taken by the *Tribune*, so long the most influential Republican newspaper of the nation. Horace Greeley is often represented as declaring flatly that the South should be allowed to depart in peace. His opinion, while not much more defensible, was decidedly different. Greeley wished to make sure that it was the will of the Southern majority to secede, and not the mere whim of fire-eating leaders. "I have said repeatedly, and here repeat," he wrote in the *Tribune* of Jan. 14, "that, if the people of the Slave States, or of the Cotton States alone, really wish to get out of the Union, I am in favor of letting them out so soon as that result

can be peacefully and constitutionally attained. . . . If they will . . . take first deliberately by fair vote a ballot of their own citizens, none being coerced nor intimidated, and that vote shall indicate a settled resolve to get out of the Union, I will do all I can to help them out at an early day. I want no States kept in the Union by coercion; but I insist that none shall be coerced out of it. . . ."

But James Gordon Bennett's *Herald,* James Brooks's *Express,* Gerard Hallock's *Journal of Commerce,* and several minor journals, as the *Daily News* and *Day Book,* were frankly in favor of letting the secessionists proceed without any restraint from the Federal Government. The *Herald* was much the most important, although the *World* sneeringly said that every new subscriber meant two cents and a little more contempt for Bennett. It was read everywhere about New York for its full news and its smartness; the caustic observations of Dickens and William H. Russell upon New York journalism were founded principally upon it; and Administration leaders at Washington found its comprehensive dispatches invaluable throughout the war. Maintaining its old levity of tone, the *Herald* used at this period to speak of the *World, Tribune,* and *Times* as the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. It remarked that Lincoln had once split rails and now he was splitting the Union. It called Greeley "the Hon. Massa Greeley," and it probably refrained only by a supreme effort from nicknaming Bryant. One of its cardinal tenets was that slavery was really unobjectionable. As the two sections drew near war, it printed a description of slum life in Liverpool, remarking that compared with the English laborer, "the slave lives like a prince." He had his cabin, neat, clean, and weatherproof; he had his own garden patch, over which he was lord paramount; he was well-fed, well-lodged, well-clothed, and rarely overworked; sleek, happy, contented, enjoying his many holidays with gusto, he lived to a great age. Before the New Year, the *Herald* had spoken out plainly against coercion. It would bring on a "a fratricidal conflict, which will destroy the industrial interests

of all sections, and put us back at least a hundred years in the estimation of the civilized world."

As one State after another passed out of the Union, therefore, a half dozen newspapers, the *Herald, Daily News, Journal of Commerce, Day Book, Staats Zeitung,* and *Courrier des États Unis* were taking an attitude friendly to the South; one, the *Tribune,* simply wrung its hands; and the *Evening Post, Times,* and *World* alone urged severe measures. Jefferson Davis, wrote the *Evening Post,* "knows that secession is a forcible rupture of an established government; he knows that it must, if persisted in, lead to war." "If our Southern brethren think they can better themselves by going out," declared Bennett's *Herald* on Jan. 17, "in heaven's name let them go in peace. We cannot keep them by force."

During January nearly all eyes were fastened upon the various plans for keeping the Union intact by arranging a compromise, and preposterous some of these plans were. The Crittenden Compromise, which proposed making the Missouri line of 36′ 30″ the constitutional boundary between slavery and freedom in the Territories, was brusquely condemned by the *Evening Post.* "In every respect the . . . scheme is objectionable, and no Republican who understands the principles of his party, or who is faithful to what he believes the fundamental objects of the Federal Constitution, can assent to it for one moment," the journal said on Jan. 26. The Republican Party had been established and had just won its great victory upon the principle that slavery should not be extended into any Territory whatever; how could it give it up without committing suicide? In the same issue the *Evening Post* said that the violent acts of the South, the seizure of forts and arsenals, the drilling of men to prevent arrests, "are treasonable acts, and amount to levying war upon the United States," while it called Senator Toombs "a blustering and cowardly traitor." The *Tribune,* which believed that secession was a mere threatening gesture, and that Northern firmness might overawe the rebels and bring them back into the Union,

was also against the Crittenden plan. "No compromise, then! No delusive and deluding concessions! No surrender of principle!" exclaimed Greeley on Jan. 18. The next day the *Tribune* evinced its failure to grasp the situation by remarking that if Major Anderson at Fort Sumter had fired on the rebels when the *Star of the West* was turned back from his relief, "treason would have been stayed. That act alone would have saved Virginia from plunging into the fatal gulf of rebellion."

The *Times* was as firmly against a compromise as the *Evening Post*. Stand by the Union and the Constitution first, wrote Raymond; when their safety is assured, then only can we talk of guarantees for the South. "We would yield nothing whatever to exactions pressed by threats of disunion. . . ." So was the *World*, which said that "It is of no use to mince matters; this rampant cotton rebellion will haul in its horns or we shall have civil war." The *World* had its own plan of restoring harmony by extinguishing sectional spirit. It proposed, first, to divest the Federal executive of its overgrown patronage—the office-seekers were always pandering to sectional prejudice; second, to improve the navigation of the Mississippi; third, to construct levees to prevent Mississippi floods; and fourth, to build a Southern Pacific railway. It naïvely said that if these public works "could be adopted as a preventive instead of a remedy, their cost would probably be less than the cost of a civil war." The *Tribune* also had a pacification scheme. It suggested that the Federal Government begin the purchase of all the slaves of Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana, about 600,000 in all; to pay not more than $100,000,000, or less than $200 each, for them; and to complete the transaction in, say, 1876.

A petition for the Crittenden compromise circulated by William B. Astor found 140 signatures at the *Herald* office. By now, indeed, Bennett's *Herald* was expressing opinions which seem madness.

After appealing to Lincoln to beg the South to return; after appealing to the Republican Party to repudiate its

Chicago platform; after appealing to Congress to pass the Crittenden resolution or submit it to the States, the *Herald* appealed to the South. On Jan. 4, railing at the imbecility of Congress and the indifference of President-elect Lincoln, it proposed that the Southern States arrange a Constitutional Convention for their own section alone. Let this body adopt amendments to the Constitution embodying guarantees of the return of fugitive slaves, of the validity of the Dred Scott decision, and of universal tolerance of opinion respecting slavery as a social institution. "Let them submit these different amendments to the different Northern States, earnestly inviting their acceptance of them, and assigning a period, similar to that which was appointed for the ratification of the Constitution of 1787, when all States which should have agreed to their proposition should be considered as thenceforth forming the future United States of America." The whole nation, said the *Herald,* would join such a Union, save New England. Probably the Yankee States would stay out. Good riddance to them. The rest of the country is sick and tired of New England. It has had too much "of the provincial meanness, bigotry, self-conceit, love for 'isms,' hypercritical opposition to anything and everything, universal fault-finding, hard bargaining, and systematic home lawlessness . . . which are covering their section of the country with odium."

This was not a shabby offer to the South—to take any conditions it made and kick the Yankees out. But the *Herald* waxed more generous still. On March 20, a month after the inauguration of Jefferson Davis, it had found the solution of the great problem: let the new Congress, when it met at Lincoln's call, adopt the Confederate Constitution, and submit it to the nation for ratification by three-fourths of the States. "This would settle the question and restore peace and harmony to a troubled nation, while at the same time every statesman and every man of common sense must admit that the new Constitution is a decided improvement on the old." The *Herald* enumerated its merits: the restriction of the President to

one six-year term, the budget system of appropriations, the interdiction of internal improvements at the expense of the national treasury, and so on. "Let Mr. Lincoln call Congress together for the purpose, and he will have taken the first step of a statesman since he came to power." The *Herald* did not say who it believed should be President under the new constitution, but it could hardly avoid concluding that Jefferson Davis ought to be accepted along with the Confederate system of government. All the while, the *Journal of Commerce, Express,* and *News* were imperturbably declaring that the South should be allowed to depart amicably.

A surprising number of New Yorkers, indeed, sympathized with this hostility to coercion. A meeting of disciples of Mayor Fernando Wood held at Brooke's Hall on Dec. 15 gives us the key to much of this sentiment. Its chairman said that the city had lost $20,000,000 a month in Southern orders, an estimate which merchants applauded; while the rougher element that later engaged in the Draft Riots adopted with a roar the resolution that, "believing our Southern brethren to be now engaged in the holy cause of American liberty, and trying to roll back the avalanche of Britishism, we extend to them our heartfelt sympathy." The *Herald* the same day computed the loss of the North from the "national convulsion" at $478,620,000, explaining that flour had fallen a dollar a barrel, wheat twenty cents a bushel, and many manufactories had suspended, since Lincoln's election. Mayor Fernando Wood, in his message published Jan. 8, proposed that if disunion took place, New York should declare itself a free city, clinging to its commerce with both sections. Wood was a Philadelphia Quaker by birth, who began life as a cigar-maker, and made his way in politics by a physique so handsome, a personality so fascinating, and a character so unscrupulous that he has been well called the successor of Aaron Burr. The *Evening Post* remarked that it had always known he was a knave, but it had not before suspected him of being so egregious a fool, and asked whether the city in seceding

would take the Hudson River, Long Island Sound, New York Central, and Erie Canal with it—it couldn't do without them. Even the *Herald* sneered at his proposal. But William H. Russell, visiting the city, as late as March was shocked by the indifference which prominent citizens showed to the impending catastrophe.

This indifference the *Evening Post, Times,* and *Tribune* were loyally trying to dispel. On Feb. 2, when five States had seceded, the *Evening Post* warned them that the act meant war. "No one doubts that if the people of those States should transfer them back to Spain or France, the United States would be prepared to recover them at all the hazards of war; and, for the same reason, she will recover them from the hands of any other 'foreign powers' under any other names." A fortnight later Bryant reiterated:

> . . . Our government means no war, and will not, if it can be avoided, shed a drop of blood; if war comes, it must be made by the South; but let the South understand, when it does come, that eighty years of enterprise, of accumulation, and of progress in all the arts of warfare have not been lost upon the North. Cool in temperament, peaceful in its pursuits, loving industry and trade more than fighting, it has yet the old blood of the Saxon in its veins, and will go to battle with the same ponderous and irresistible energy with which it has reared its massive civilization out of the primitive wilderness.

The *Times* was equally emphatic. When the *Journal of Commerce* argued that two American nations, one free and one slave, might live as cordially together as the Protestant and Catholic parts of Switzerland, the *Tribune* reminded it that in 1846-7 the Catholic cantons had tried to secede, and the Swiss government had instantly crushed the movement.

Bryant was keenly interested all the while in the formation of Lincoln's Cabinet. Immediately after Lincoln's nomination he had written him saying that "I was not without apprehensions that the nomination might fall upon some person encumbered with bad associates, and it was with a sense of relief and infinite satisfaction that I,

with thousands of others, heard the news of your nomination." He was desirous of having Cabinet places given his friends Chase and Gideon Welles, and Parke Godwin prints in his biography the three letters in which he urged the claims of these men and protested against Cameron. He also wrote Lincoln in behalf of a low tariff. But the biography does not contain the letter which Hiram Barney, Collector of the Port, wrote Bryant from Chicago immediately (Jan. 17, 1861) after seeing Lincoln regarding his Cabinet:

I went with Mapes, Opdyke, and Hageboom from Washington to Columbus and Springfield. We saw and conversed freely and fully with Gov. Chase and Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln received your letter announcing our mission the night previous to our arrival. I thank you for writing it. It was influential, I have no doubt, in procuring for us the favorable reception and hearing which was accorded to us. Mr. Lincoln has invited to his Cabinet only three persons, to wit—Mr. Bates, Mr. Seward, and Mr. Cameron. All these have accepted. In regard to the latter-named, however, Mr. Lincoln became satisfied that he had made a mistake, and wrote him requesting him to withdraw his acceptancy or decline. Mr. Cameron refused to answer the letter and was greatly offended by it. He, however, authorized a mutual friend to telegraph and he did so—that Mr. Cameron would not on any account accept a seat in his Cabinet. Mr. Lincoln has thus a quarrel on his hands which he is anxious to adjust satisfactorily before he proceeds further in his formation of his Cabinet. He is advised from Washington not to conclude further upon the members of his Cabinet until he reaches Washington, which will be probably about the middle of February—and he has concluded to act according to this advice. We tried to change this purpose, but I fear in vain. He has not offered a place to Mr. Chase. He wants and expects to invite him to the Treasury Department. But he fears this will offend Pennsylvania, and he wants to reconcile the Republicans of that State to it before it is settled. He thinks Mr. Chase would be willing to let the matter stand so and leave the option with him (Mr. Lincoln) of taking him when he can do so without embarrassment. He knows that Gov. Chase does not desire to go into the Cabinet and prefers the Senate—but he relies upon Gov. Chase's patriotism to overcome the objections which arise from this unpleasant state of things.

He wants to take Judd, but this selection will offend some of his friends and he does not decide upon it. Welles of Connecticut is his preference for New England. Blair of Maryland is favorably considered. Dayton will either go into his Cabinet or will have the mission to England or France. One of these missions he intends to give to Cassius M. Clay. Caleb B. Smith of Indiana is urged upon him and he may have to take him instead of Judd. Caleb is almost as objectionable as Cameron, and for similar reasons. He received good naturedly and with some compliments my Cabinet which I gave him in pencil on a slip of paper, rather in joke—as follows:

Lincoln and Judd	Bates and Blair
Seward and Chase	Dayton and Welles

He considers Chase the ablest and best man in America. He is determined that Justice shall be done to all his friends, especially to the Republicans of Democratic antecedents, and Mr. Seward understands that he will not allow the Democratic . . . Republicans of New York to be deprived of their full share of influence and patronage under his Administration. He is opposed to all offers of compromise by Republicans which can in the least affect the integrity of the principles as set forth in the Chicago platform.

If he would act now on his own judgment and preferences he would make a good Cabinet not much different from that I have above mentioned. What he will ultimately do after reaching Washington no one, not even himself, can tell. He wants to please and satisfy all his friends.

As this letter indicates, the *Evening Post* office was one of the chief Eastern centers from which the "Democratic Republicans" in these dark months tried to make their influence felt upon the incoming Administration.

Lincoln's inaugural address was warmly applauded by the *Evening Post*. Bryant had seen the President-elect at the Astor House as he passed through New York, and taken new faith in him. "Admirable as the inaugural address is in all its parts—convincing in argument, concise and pithy in manner and simple in style—the generous and conciliatory tone is the most admirable," the poet wrote. "Mr. Lincoln thoroughly refutes the theory of secession. He points out its follies and warns the disaffected dis-

tricts against its consequences, but he does so in the kindly, pitying manner of a father who reasons with an erring child." On inauguration day the *Evening Post* had again predicted war with the rebels, and again declared that "the Unionists of our States will arise and deal them the destruction they deserve." The *Tribune* regarded the message in the same way. It especially praised "the tone of almost tenderness," below which Lincoln's iron determination was evident. The message would carry to twenty millions the tidings that the Federal Government still lived, "with a *Man* at the head of it." The *World* and *Times* spoke in similar terms.

But the secessionist press abused this noble state paper roundly. The *Herald,* which had been praising Buchanan as a wise and just statesman, and attacking Lincoln as an incompetent, said that the new President might almost as well have told his audience a funny story and let it go. His speech was a body of vague generalities artfully designed to allow its readers to make whatever interpretations they pleased. "It is neither candid nor statesmanlike; nor does it possess any essential of dignity or patriotism. It would have caused a Washington to mourn, and would have inspired Jefferson, Madison, or Jackson with contempt." Gerard Hallock in the *Journal of Commerce* involved himself in a neat contradiction, writing: "The President puts forth earnest professions of love for the Union, and places justly and properly much stress upon his duty to preserve it and execute the laws. But he commits the practical error of setting up the theory of an unbroken Union, against the stubborn fact of a divided and dissevered one." Why, asked Bryant, was it "just" for the President to dwell upon his duty to preserve the Union, and yet "a practical error" to do so?

Thus the nation moved rapidly toward civil war. While the *Herald, Journal of Commerce, Express,* and *Daily News* still talked of compromise, actually they had given up hope of it and spent their chief energies in decrying coercion; the first-named having admitted as much in an editorial of Feb. 3 headed "No Compromise Now

Except That of a Peaceable Separation." In fact, all these journals found in the idea of a division much to commend. At the end of January, Bennett's writers began preaching imperialistic doctrines. "North America is too large for one government," the *Herald* reflected on the 24th, "but establish two and they in good time will cover the continent." The next day, under the title, "Manifest Destiny of the North and South," it drew an alluring picture of the American conquests that would follow the dissolution of the Union. Inevitably, the Confederacy would subdue Mexico, Cuba, and other Caribbean lands. The United States would conquer Canada. The two great nations would be the most friendly of allies. "Northern troops may yet have to repel invaders of the possessions of slave-holders in Mexico and Venezuela, and our fleet will joyfully aid in dispersing new Spanish armadas on the coast of Cuba. Nor do we doubt that . . . under the walls of Quebec, and on the banks of the St. Lawrence, legions from Louisiana, Alabama, and South Carolina will aid us." This glorious vision of unlimited booty was repeatedly dwelt upon.

The *Herald* had less Northern influence than its large circulation would seem to imply, and was hearkened to chiefly at the South. Many secessionists, remembering the business and social connections of the South with the metropolis, and the large Democratic majority New York generally gave, believed that the city would assist to divide the North and aid the rebellion. "The New York *Herald* and New York *Evening Express* have done much toward disseminating this false theory," said the New Orleans *Picayune* later. The Chicago *Tribune* that summer quoted a Southern visitor as saying "that we of the North can have little or no idea of the pestilent influence which the New York *News* and other journals of that sort have exerted upon the popular mind of that section." Probably less harm was done the Union by Bennett's erratic ideas than by Greeley's influential opinion that if the South was determined to go, go she ought. Bryant's editorials in the *Evening Post*, above those of any other

New York journal, expressed an elevated, unwavering, and steadying demand for loyalty to the Constitution. He had no patience with Greeley's acquiescence in a popular-sovereignty doctrine of secession. He was a far abler writer than any man on the staff of the *Times* or *World*, even Raymond. His superior steadfastness and shrewdness of judgment was strikingly illustrated just before the war began.

On April 3, as if by concert, the *Tribune* and *Times* published long and emphatic editorials attacking Lincoln for his alleged indecision and inactivity. The *Tribune* headed its editorial "Come to the Point!" and demanded that a programme be laid down. Greeley apparently cared little what this programme should be. "If the Union is to be maintained at all hazards, let the word be passed along the line that the laws are to be enforced. . . . If the secession of the Gulf States—and of any more that choose to follow—is to be regarded as a fixed fact, let that be proclaimed, and let the line of revenue collection be established and maintained this side of them." The *Times* devoted two columns to "Wanted—A Policy." The Administration, it said, had fallen so far short of public expectations that the Union was weaker than a month before. Indeed, the Administration had exhibited "a blindness and a stolidity without a parallel in the history of intelligent statesmanship." Lincoln had "spent time and strength in feeding rapacious and selfish politicians, which should have been bestowed upon saving the Union"; and "we tell him . . . that he must go up to a higher level than he has yet reached, before he can see and realize the high duties to which he has been called." Such utterances lent too much support to the *Herald's* constant statements that "the Lincoln Administration is cowardly, mean, and vicious," its constant references to "the incompetent, ignorant, and desperate 'Honest Abe.'"

In a crushing editorial next day, Bryant demolished these peevish outbursts. First, he pointed out, it was hard within thirty days to decide what course was best

as regarded the seceding States and the wavering border States. The Cabinet was said to be divided, and the most careful reflection, investigation, and debate was necessary for a question so big with the fate of the republic. Second, how could the facile critics know that Lincoln had not fixed upon his policy, but concluded to make it known by execution, not by a windy proclamation? "If Fort Sumter is to be reinforced, should we give the rebels previous notice?" There existed other considerations, as the fact that every day officers in the army and navy were going over to the rebels, and if Lincoln decided upon an energetic course it would be indispensable to be able to count on an energetic execution in every contingency. This answer displayed an admirable patience—a patience of which Bryant might well have had a larger stock in the four years to come.

The first edition of the *Evening Post* on April 13 carried the news that the bombardment of Fort Sumter had begun, and carried also an editorial written with all Bryant's high fervor:

> This is a day which will be ever memorable in our annals. To-day treason has risen from blustering words to cowardly deeds. Men made reckless by a long life of political gambling—for years cherishing treason next their hearts while swearing fealty to the government—have at last goaded themselves on to murder a small band of faithful soldiers. They have deliberately chosen the issue of battle. To-day, who hesitates in his allegiance is a traitor with them. . . .
>
> To-day the nation looks to the government to put down treason forever. . . . It will not grudge the men or the money which are needed. We have enjoyed for eighty years the blessings of liberty and constitutional government. It is a small sacrifice we are now to lay upon the altar. In the name of constitutional liberty, in the name of law and order, in the name of all that is dear to freemen, we shall put down treason and restore the supremacy of the Constitution.

The day was one of intense excitement. The *Evening Post* of Monday, April 15, reported that thousands of eager inquirers had thronged the streets in the neighbor-

hood of the office and packed the counting-room downstairs until there was no room for a single additional person. The successive editions were seized upon madly. At five the first rumor of Sumter's surrender came over the wires, and at five-thirty it was confirmed. Within a space of seconds rather than minutes the fourth edition, containing the complete news, was being cried on the streets. The *Herald* next morning sold 135,000 copies, a world's record. That Monday Bryant's leading editorial, "The Union, Now and Forever," took its text in the President's call for volunteers. "If he calls for only 75,000," said the *Evening Post,* "it is because he knows that he can have a million if he needs them." George Cary Eggleston has said that he and Bryant's other associates were often amazed to see how calmly he would write an editorial that proved full of intense eloquence, every line blazing. This was such an editorial, ending in a ringing peroration: " 'God speed the President!' is the voice of millions of determined freemen to-day."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CRITICAL DAYS OF THE CIVIL WAR

WHEN Sumter brought the North to its feet as one man, as Lowell wrote, the press and general public believed the war would be brief. The best editorial judgment in New York had been that the rebellion could be strangled by a blockade alone. "A half dozen ships of war stationed at the proper points is all that is wanted," said the *Times* on Feb. 11, 1861. "In a few months' time the Southern Confederacy would be completely starved out." The *Tribune,* arguing Jan. 22 for closing the Southern ports, had predicted that as a consequence "the South will decline, and finally collapse, in utter humiliation. And this will not result from bloody wars, but from the peaceful operation of the laws of trade." On the same date the *Evening Post* remarked that the secession disease required not cautery or the knife, but a little judicious regimen. Uncle Sam might crush the seceding States with ease. "He could devastate every cotton field, and level every seaboard city in less than a year, if he were so foolhardy and malignant as they have shown themselves to be." It must be remembered that at the time of all these utterances Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas had not yet joined the South. But in his call to arms just after Sumter Bryant allowed himself to boast that every loyal arm was a match for ten traitors. A pathetic *Evening Post* editorial of June 15, "The Beginning of the End," following the Confederate evacuation of Harper's Ferry, predicted that Jefferson Davis meant to make a desperate effort at Manassas, for "his cause is on its last legs, and unless he puts forth a bold stroke now, it is gone."

It was because the *Tribune* was so confident of an easy victory that it raised the cry, "On to Richmond!" in

June and early July. Simply because it shared the same confidence, the *Evening Post,* with greater wisdom, pleaded for deliberation and care, and carried editorials with such headings as "Patience!" (July 1). After the advance began, it thought that Jefferson Davis ought to be captured within a month (July 17).

When upon this over-confidence fell the shock of the rout at Bull Run, the *Post* felt it necessary to hearten the North by minimizing the defeat. There was no need to labor the moral that the war was going to be long and hard, and Bryant was worried lest the public should be depressed. Frederic Law Olmsted wrote him that "although it is not best to say it publicly, you should know, at least, that the retreat was generally of the worst character, and is already in its results most disastrous." The *Post* harped for some time upon the lesson of the need for better discipline and officers. But it also tried to maintain that Manassas was the Sebastopol of the rebels, a powerful natural position; that "in any fair, open, hand-to-hand fight, the Union troops are too much for the seceders"; and even that the moral effect of the battle would be in the North's favor. Greeley felt the same impulse when, under the reaction from his "On to Richmond!" mischief, he promised that the *Tribune* would cease nagging the army, and devote itself to inspiriting the public.

As soon as they perceived that the war would be bitter, the editors of the *Post* took their stand with what the historian Rhodes calls the radical party of the North; the party of Secretary Chase, Senators Trumbull and Sumner, and Gen. Carl Schurz. The paper's Washington correspondent early (May 3) divided the Cabinet into radicals—Welles, Chase, Blair—and conservatives —Seward, Bates, and Smith. The radicals wanted the war prosecuted with intense energy, no thought of compromise, and no particular regard for the feelings of the border States and Northern Democrats. Always ardent, sometimes precipitate, they disliked the cautious Seward, and sometimes lost patience with Lincoln himself. In

the end their policies were usually adopted, but Lincoln's wisdom lay in not adopting them prematurely; as Schurz admitted in 1864, when he wrote a schoolmate that he had often thought Lincoln wrong, but in the end had always found him right.

Much of the radicalism of Bryant and Parke Godwin was quite sound. In the first month the *Evening Post* published no fewer than four editorials asking for a hurried and strict blockade of the South, and prophesying that it would "put an end to the rebellion more quickly than any other plan of action." On July 20 it anticipated Ericsson by asking for ironclads, recalling that Robert L. Stevens had begun building a floating armored battery under an act of Congress passed in 1842, but had never finished it. The paper thought that "half a dozen thoroughly shot-proof gunboats, of light draft," could silence Forts Sumter, Pulaski, and Jackson, or better still, run past them and dominate Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. It asked for a national draft on July 9, 1862, nine months before Congress passed a law for one. Lincoln's early policy was to free and protect all Southern negroes who, having been employed in the military service of the Confederacy, came within the lines of the Northern commands, but this did not satisfy Bryant. On Dec. 6, 1861, he asked Congress to confiscate the property of the rebels, appoint State commissioners of forfeiture to take charge of it, and as fast as negroes came within Northern reach, make them freemen.

Bryant was in direct communication with radical officials in Washington and radical commanders in the field. He corresponded with Secretary Chase; Gen. James Wadsworth and Gen. E. A. Hitchcock wrote him startingly frank letters; and he heard regularly from Consul-General Bigelow in Paris. The slowness with which the war dragged on was deplored by the *Evening Post* even as it was deplored by Chase, Schurz, and Sumner. The paper did not criticize Lincoln with the signal lack of judgment Greeley often showed, much less with the rancorous hostility of Bennett's *Herald* or the now Demo-

cratic *World*. But by the middle of September, 1861, it was censuring him for the reluctance with which he signed the Confiscation Act, and reminding him that "his official position is in the lead, and not in the rear." On Oct. 11 it published an editorial, "Playing With War," in which it criticized the Administration for lukewarmness and declared that the public wanted active measures; "the more energetic, the more effective these measures, the more telling the blow, the more they will applaud."

These complaints, the complaints of a large party all over the North and of an able Congressional group, redoubled as the first half of 1862 passed with almost no news from Virginia but that of disasters. On July 8 the *Post* asked three sharp questions. Why had enlistments been stopped three or four months earlier—for Stanton, believing success at hand, had foolishly halted the recruiting on April 3? Why had the militia of the loyal States never, since the war began, been reorganized, drilled, and armed? And why had no great arsenals of munitions been collected? "We have been sluggish in our preparations and timid in our execution," the paper admonished Washington. "Let us change all this." Such complaints were natural and useful in the dark hour when McClellan's army recoiled after bloody fighting from its first advance on Richmond. Bryant also did well to press his attacks upon corruption in government contracts, and political favoritism in military appointments. When this month Congress authorized the use of negroes in camp service and trench digging, he reasonably found fault with the Administration for its slowness in acting upon the authorization.

But Bryant's "radicalism" was not commendable when he complained of the delay in emancipating the slaves; of the prominence of Northern Democrats, not hostile to slavery, in the army and at Washington; and of the consideration given border State sentiment. Had Lincoln acted rashly in the early months of the war, he would have forced Kentucky and Missouri into the arms of the

South, and he thought (Sept. 22, 1861) that "to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game." Had he made haste to emancipate the slaves, he would irretrievably have offended powerful elements in the North and the Border States which were willing to fight for the Union, but not to fight against slavery. Military historians have generally condemned Lincoln's interference with McClellan's plans in the early spring of 1862, an interference into which he was forced by such pressure as Bryant was exerting. The *Evening Post* was unjust to Lincoln when it explained (July 7, 1862) why the people suspected him of indecision. "He has trusted too much to his subordinates; he has not been sufficiently peremptory with them, either with his generals or his Secretaries; and his whole Administration has been marked by a certain tone of languor and want of earnestness which has not corresponded with the wishes of the people." It was unjust when it spoke again (July 23) of Lincoln's "slumbers," and of the "drowsy influence of border State opiates."

In condemning the military incapacity of the Union generals in the East the newspaper was upon firmer ground. McClellan became commander of the Army of the Potomac immediately after Bull Run, and was made commander-in-chief of all the armies on Nov. 1, 1861. As the new year arrived without any movement, Bryant began grumbling over the idea held by many officers "that the wisest way of conducting the war is to weary out the South with delays." He argued that if the North did not show more energy, France or England might eventually interfere. "If we understand the case," he wrote caustically on Feb. 6, "Gen. McClellan has infinite claims upon our gratitude for the discipline which he has given to the army, but that discipline is still too imperfect to warrant any movement." He pointed out that the enemy was relying upon this inefficiency, and was so confident of the situation in Virginia that Beauregard had just been dispatched to reinforce the Confederate army in the West. A few days later Bryant received a letter which

Gen. Wadsworth wrote him from camp, denouncing McClellan roundly:

I repeat the conclusion intimated in my last letter. The commander-in-chief is almost inconceivably incompetent, or he has his own plans—widely different from those entertained by the people of the North—of putting down this Rebellion. I have just read the gloomy reports from Europe, threatening intervention, etc. In my despair, I write in the faint hope of arousing our Press to speak out what is in the hearts of ninety-nine one hundredths of the army, and nine-tenths of the country—the commander-in-chief is incompetent or disloyal. I have come slowly to this conclusion. No man greeted his appointment more cordially than I did. There is not the shadow of any personal feeling in my conviction. I have nothing personal to complain of. I must again caution you, that all this is strictly confidential.

Wadsworth reiterated this opinion all spring, while Bryant heard from Gen. John Pope and Gen. Hitchcock in the same vein. It was not until May 5 that McClellan fought his first battle, though he had held command since the preceding July. The *Evening Post* was full of hope in the Peninsular campaign that followed, warning McClellan not to overestimate the enemy's forces, and that "hitherto our great fault has been that we have not followed up our successes." Its dejection was proportionately great when in the first days of July the campaign ended in failure, and McClellan withdrew his army from the position he had reached immediately in front of Richmond. The disgust of the radicals with McClellan was now complete, and the *Post* was as eloquent as the *Tribune* or *Times* in attacking him. On July 3 it mournfully remarked that "while the cause cannot perhaps be defeated even by incompetence," it could be gravely imperilled. "We have suffered long enough from inaction and overcaution. Henceforth we must have action. . . . If it be asked who is the best man, we can only say that it is Mr. Lincoln's business to know, but bitter experience has taught us that Gen. McClellan is not." Lincoln was admonished that he must open his eyes without a moment's delay to the exigency, dismiss every slothful or

imbecile leader, infuse energy and unity into his Cabinet, and recruit new armies. It was now that the *Post* began asking for conscription, while it gave a ringing endorsement to Lincoln's call for "three hundred thousand more."

The *Herald,* incapable of blaming a Democrat like McClellan, in July attacked Stanton for the army's failure, but the *Evening Post* showed that McClellan himself had said that he had more than enough troops to take Richmond. The Chicago *Tribune* later accused it of injustice to Lincoln in saying that McClellan should have been dismissed earlier, since Lincoln could not do so without offending loyal Democrats. That, rejoined the *Post,* is precisely the ground for our objection to McClellan; he was retained for political, not military, reasons.

These July days were the days in which Lincoln grew thin and haggard, Seward was sent upon a circuit of the North to arouse public men in support of the new enlistment programme, and Lowell wrote, "I don't see how we are to be saved but by a miracle." Who should succeed McClellan? Chase and Welles believed that the best general in view for the eastern command was John Pope, whose victory at Island No. 10 had given him national fame; and Bryant and Godwin, who had had some personal contact with Pope, agreed. He was called east and given the Army of Virginia. The chief command, however, went to Halleck, whom the *Evening Post* distrusted as much as Welles did, and had already (July 23) described as slower and less enterprising than McClellan.

To Halleck the *Evening Post* said that his motto must be that of the Athenian orator, action—action—action. The country wanted a Marshal Vorwarts; should its historians have none to record but General Trenches, General Strategy, or General Let-Escape? A few days later (Aug. 19) it published an editorial headed "Onward! Onward!" "The one essential element in our military movements now is celerity," it urged. "Promptness in filling up the ranks already thinned by the war,

promptness in organizing and sending forward new regiments, promptness in moving on the enemy." Bryant had written Lincoln protesting against the sluggishness of military operations, and under pressure from other radicals, early in August the editor visited Washington to remonstrate. Mayor Opdyke, President Charles King of Columbia, and many other influential New Yorkers went at about the same time for the same purpose. Bryant tells us that he had a long talk with Lincoln, "in which I expressed myself plainly and without reserve, though courteously. He bore it well, and I must say that I left him with a perfect conviction of the excellence of his intentions and the singleness of his purposes, though with sorrow for his indecision." A movement immediately began in New York to organize the radicals under a local committee.

In their editorials on military policy Bryant, Parke Godwin, and Charles Nordhoff were guided by officers who wrote from the field or whom they met in the city; and their comments were remarkably sound. At this moment, for example, the *Evening Post* sensibly ridiculed the talk of a rebel army 200,000 strong. It repeatedly expressed a conviction that never, neither at Manassas, Yorktown, or Richmond, had the enemy been superior. "There is excellent reason to believe that the rebels never had more than 40,000 men at Manassas; it is a notorious fact that when McClellan arrived on the Peninsula, there were not 10,000 men at Yorktown. At Fair Oaks Sumner's corps and Casey's division repulsed the whole rebel army. . . . A close examination of the battles before Richmond proves that the rebels never fought more than 15,000 to 25,000 men there on any one day." McClellan, it thought, had been frightened by idle fears. But when Pope failed more ignominiously than McClellan, and was soundly drubbed at the second battle of Bull Run (Aug. 30, 1862), the *Evening Post* did not confine itself to military topics. It fell again into its unjustifiable censure of Lincoln. The President was honest, devoted, and determined—

and yet the effect of his management has been such that, with all his personal popularity, in spite of the general confidence in his good intentions, and in spite of the ability and energy of several of his advisers, a large part of the nation is utterly discouraged and despondent. Many intelligent and even wise persons, indeed, do not scruple to express their suspicions that treachery lurks in the highest quarters, and that either in the army or in the Cabinet purposes are entertained which are equivalent to treason.

All this has grown out of the weakness and vacillation of the Administration, which itself has grown out of Mr. Lincoln's own want of decision and purpose. We pretend to no state secrets, but we have been told, upon what we deem good authority, that no such thing as a continued, unitary, deliberate Administration exists; that the President's brave willingness to take all responsibility has quite neutralized the idea of a conjoint responsibility; and that orders of the highest importance are issued and movements commanded, which Cabinet officers learn of as other people do, or, what is worse, which the Cabinet officers disapprove and protest against. Each Cabinet officer, again, controls his own department pretty much as he pleases, without consultation with the President or with his coadjutors. (Sept. 15, 1862.)

At this juncture the *Times* and *World* were vehemently demanding a drastic change of Cabinet officers; and in Washington Congressional sentiment was shaping itself toward the crisis of December, when a Senatorial caucus demanded the resignation of the conservative Seward. The *Herald*, panic-stricken, was telling McClellan that he was "master of the situation"—that is, he might be dictator; and calling upon him "to insist upon the modification and reconstruction of the Cabinet." It was not unnatural for Bryant to give way to his old fear that the Administration would "fight battles to produce a compromise instead of a victory."

As befitted such a warlike journal, the *Evening Post* had its own strategic plan, which it first outlined Oct. 5, 1861, and thenceforth expounded every few weeks until the closing campaigns. Briefly, it held that there was no important object in the capture of Richmond; that the indispensable aim was to destroy the Confederate armies, not to take cities. The Southern capital could

be easily removed to Knoxville, Petersburg, or Montgomery. Except in so far as was involved in opening the Mississippi and applying the blockade, it opposed the "anaconda plan" of Scott and McClellan, the plan of attacking with a half dozen armies from a half dozen sides. The rebels, it pointed out, had the advantage of inside lines and could rapidly shift their forces to defeat one Federal onslaught after another. The true strategy was for the Union itself to seize the inside lines. This could be done by concentrating its heaviest forces in those great Appalachian valleys which ran south through Virginia and Tennessee into the heart of the Confederacy. The population was in large part friendly; the Ohio River offered a base of supplies; the flanks could be secured by guarding the passes or gaps; and as the Union armies moved southward in the Tennessee and Shenandoah Valleys, they could force the evacuation of the border States. From the valleys they could fall at will upon Virginia, upon North Carolina, upon Georgia, upon Mississippi, and could rend the Confederacy in twain.

But the good and bad sides of the *Evening Post's* radicalism were best exhibited in its eagerness for emancipation. It was a noble object for which to contend, yet no one doubts that Lincoln was right in his long hesitation, and in declaring to Greeley so late as the summer of 1862 that his paramount object was to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery.

Even in the month of Bull Run the *Evening Post*, while rebuking a New England minister who asked for a national declaration in favor of emancipation, believed that the conflict, "though not a war directly aimed at the release of the slave, must indirectly work out the result in many ways." When Fremont issued his hasty proclamation of September, 1861, liberating all slaves in Missouri, which Lincoln sensibly revoked, the *Post* called it "the most popular act of the war," and was much offended by the President. By October it was dropping the uncertainty of tone in which it had spoken of the subject. Early that month it said that if it became neces-

sary to extinguish slavery in order to put down the rebellion, it must be given no mercy; a few days later it demanded the release of all captured slaves and their enlistment as cooks, trench-diggers, and other auxiliaries; while on Sept. 25 it virtually called for emancipation. The paper believed that it "would change the whole aspect of the war, bring to our side a host of new allies, call off the attention of the rebels from their present plan, and hasten the period of their subjugation." Bryant wrote just before Thanksgiving upon the probable great result of the war; and "that the extinction of slavery will form a part of it," he declared, "we have not the shadow of a doubt."

During the first half of 1862 a considerable part of the *Post's* criticism of Lincoln sprang from its impatience over his reluctance to free the slaves. This was the attitude of Sumner, of Thaddeus Stevens, of Carl Schurz, of Greeley in the *Tribune* and nearly all the *Tribune's* great constituency; most of Bryant's friends took it, and many, as Lydia Maria Child, wrote requesting editorial pleas for emancipation. It is an interesting coincidence, that on the very day, July 22, 1862, that Lincoln read his emancipation proclamation to the Cabinet, and upon Seward's suggestion put it aside, the *Evening Post's* leading editorial was an impassioned plea for such a document. Lincoln was only waiting for a victory, that his proclamation might seem to be supported by a military success. Possibly Bryant learned this from his friend Chase. At any rate, although the *Evening Post* was bitterly grieved by McClellan's failure to win a decisive victory at Antietam in September, and wrote angrily that such drawn battles were "not war but murder; butchery which fills all right-minded men with horror," it knew that emancipation might follow Lee's retreat from Maryland soil. Just after the battle Bryant wrote an editorial (Sept. 17) called, "While the Iron is Hot." There are crucial junctures, he said, when great blows must be struck at great evils. Such a juncture had arrived; "a proclamation of freedom by martial law would be hailed,

we believe, by an almost universal shout of joy in all the loyal States, as the death knell of the rebellion." Just a week later the *Evening Post* was rejoicing over the President's announcement of his forthcoming proclamation:

> It puts us right before Europe; it brings us back to our traditions; it animates our soldiers with the same spirit which led our forefathers to victory under Washington; they are fighting today, as the Revolutionary patriots fought, in the interests of the human race, for human rights. . . .

There was a lesson for all radicals in the resentment which, at even that late date, many Northern newspapers showed over the President's act. The *Journal of Commerce* had "only anticipations of evil from it," and believed that an immense majority of Northerners would view it with profound regret. The *Herald* predicted that it would ruin the white laborers of the West by bringing the negroes north to compete with them. The *World* held that it was nugatory—the South would have to be whipped before it could be given any effect. The *Courrier des Etats Unis* had deplored many errors since the republic "began rolling down the slope which promises to land it in the abyss," but it thought this blunder the most wanton and complete. What would such papers and the great body of citizens they represented have said six months earlier?

Another and highly praiseworthy evidence of the "radicalism" of the *Evening Post* was its eagerness for a far-reaching system of taxation, and for having the financial conduct of the war kept as strictly as possible upon a sound-money basis. Having been active in obtaining Chase's appointment to the Treasury, Bryant felt a special solicitude for that department. During the latter half of 1861 he repeatedly urged Congress to tax to the limit. He believed that the government should be able to pay for the war by heavy taxes, supplemented by the sale of long-term bonds, and only as a final resource should issue Treasury notes payable on demand. It was

a disappointment to the paper that Chase took no early steps for the development of an appropriate tax system. A remarkable editorial of Feb. 1, 1862, pictured the wealth of the nation: the universal possession of property, the high per capita prosperity, the bursting granaries, the rich output of precious metals. It recalled the fact that three times the national debt contracted in great wars had been wiped out, while in the thirties the treasury overflowed until men racked their brains with plans for spending the superfluity. Never was a nation more cheerfully inclined to accept high taxes; "the general feeling is one of impatience that Congress is so slow in performing this necessary duty."

As early as Jan. 15 the *Evening Post* had uttered its first warning against a reliance upon paper money. Naturally, the passage of the greenback legislation of Feb. 25, 1862, for the issue of $150,000,000 in legal-tender notes, dismayed it. It believed the law grossly unconstitutional, and was certain that it would be disastrous in effect. Secretary Chase wrote to Bryant, on Feb. 4, arguing for the bill, but in vain. "Your feelings of repugnance to the legal-tender clause can hardly be greater than my own," said Chase; "but I am convinced that, as a temporary measure, it is indispensably necessary." He thought that a minority of the people would not sustain the notes unless they were made a tender for debt, and that this minority could control the majority to all practical intents. But the *Evening Post,* like all the other New York journals save two, opposed the bill to the last. Bryant did not believe that the measure could be temporary, as Chase put it. In an editorial called "A Deluge at Hand," he compared the law to the first breach made in one of the Holland dikes:

> In all the examples which the world has seen, the evil of an irredeemable paper currency runs its course as certainly as the smallpox or any other disease. The first effects are of such a nature that the remedy is never applied; there is no disposition to apply it. The inflation of the currency pleases a large class of

persons by a rise of prices and an extraordinary activity in business. People buy to sell at higher prices; property passes rapidly from hand to hand; fortunes are made; the community is delirious with speculation. At such a time suppose Mr. Chase to step in and say: "My friends, this fun has been going on long enough; you must be tired by this time of speculation. Let us repeal the legal-tender clause in the Treasury-note bill and return to specie payments." What sort of reception would this proposal meet?

His prophecy was fulfilled. Successive issues of legal-tender notes followed, until the total reached $450,000,000; prices soared, and the cost of the war was immensely enhanced; and at one time $39 in gold would buy $100 in currency. The *Evening Post*, it may be added, was the first newspaper to suggest the issue of interest-bearing banknotes as an expedient for the gradual contraction of the currency, a measure Congress adopted in March, 1863.

Meanwhile, the Northern armies failed to make progress. When in December, 1862, the criminally incompetent Burnside attacked Lee's entrenched army at Fredericksburg, and was flung back with the loss of nearly 13,000 men, an outburst of anger came from the whole New York press. "The Late Massacre" was the heading the *Evening Post* gave its editorial of Dec. 18, in which, three days after Burnside fell back, it could not understand why he was not already removed. "How long is such intolerable and wicked blundering to continue? What does the President wait for? We hear that a great, a horrible crime has been committed; we do not hear that those guilty of it are under arrest; we do not hear even that they are to be removed from the places of trust which they have shown themselves so incapable to fill." The Democratic press, led by the *Herald*, demanded the reinstatement of McClellan, while the radical press wanted an entirely new general. Once more, like the *Tribune*, *Herald*, and *World*, the *Evening Post* blamed Lincoln for his generals' mistakes. "The President has required too little from his agents; his good nature has led him to be less strict toward them than

he ought to be, while at the same time his confidence in himself and his advisers has led him, unfortunately, to deny himself that general counsel of the nation by which he might have benefited had he kept up confidential relations between himself and the people." Yet it had praised the choice of Burnside, calling him an energetic, calm, and judicious leader, who had the prestige of success in his favor.

As the spring campaign of 1863 opened, the *Post* reflected the renewed hopefulness of the North. It was not pleased by the selection of Hooker to be the new commander, but it was encouraged by his rapid reorganization of the army and restoration of fighting discipline. The new advance had the old result—disaster. On May 7, lamenting Hooker's ignominious defeat at Chancellorsville, the *Evening Post* condemned his strategy as incomprehensible. It was quite right in its general verdict, and in a number of specific criticisms, as when it said that the disposition of the forces under Sedgwick had been insane. But we can hardly say as much of its censure of Hooker and the Administration for an alleged failure to use the needed reserves. There were 60,000 men among the Washington defenses, it declared, who might have been replaced by militia and thrown into the battle. As a matter of fact, Hooker had failed to employ 35,000 fresh troops right at hand; his army was large enough, and much too large for his capacity to handle it. It fell back across the Rappahannock, and the stage was set for Lee's descent upon Pennsylvania.

Rhodes states that "by the middle of June (1863) the movements of Lee in Virginia warned the North of the approaching invasion" that culminated at Gettysburg. But the readers of the *Evening Post* were warned of it by a column editorial on May 21, two weeks before Lee took his first preliminary steps. That such a prophecy could be made shows how conversant with the military situation the great New York journals were kept by their war correspondents, their files of Southern newspapers, and their high official advisers. Bryant wrote that he

believed Jefferson Davis was preparing his last desperate stroke, in the knowledge that Grant might soon wrest the whole Mississippi from him, that there would be more Union cavalry raids like Stoneman's and Grierson's, and that even if the Confederacy beat off another attack like Hooker's, it would prove a Pyrrhic victory:

> There are unmistakable indications that Davis is quietly withdrawing troops from the outlying camps along the seacoasts to reinforce Lee, which movement will be continued, we think, until that general has a command of 150,000 to 200,000 men. As soon as it is ready Lee will move, we conjecture, not in the direction of Washington, but of the Shenandoah Valley, with a view to crossing the Potomac somewhere between Martinsburg and Cumberland. It will be easy for him . . . to defend his flanks . . . and to maintain also uninterrupted communications with Staunton and the Central Virginia railway. The valley itself is filled with rapidly ripening harvests, and once upon the river supplies may be got from Pennsylvania.

The editorial proposed either the occupation of the Shenandoah in force, or a new attack on Lee, and advised the Maryland and Pennsylvania authorities to fortify their towns and raise fresh bodies of troops.

When the invasion actually began, parts of the North were frightened, but the *Evening Post* was almost gleeful. On June 17, when news came that the first Confederates were across the Potomac, it expressed the hope that Lee would push on so that he might be cut off and destroyed. Ten days later, when the rebels had reached Carlisle, Pa., it was jubilant: "It is time for the nation to rise: the great occasion has come, and now, if we had prepared ourselves for it, and had collected and drilled reserve forces, we might end the rebellion in a month." On June 29, two days before the battle began, it congratulated Meade on an unsurpassed military opportunity, and urged three considerations upon him. He should insist that Washington help and not embarrass him, he should ask for all the reserves available, "and then, having given battle in due time, let him avoid the mistake of McClellan at Antietam, by pursuing the enemy until

he is completely overthrown." That the chance for pursuit would come the *Post* never doubted.

The close of the three days' struggle at Gettysburg left Bryant confident that the turning point of the war had been passed. "There is every reason to hope that the rebel army of Virginia will never recross the Potomac as an army," he said on July 6; but whether Lee crossed it or not, "the rebellion has received a staggering blow, from which it would scarcely seem possible for it to recover." The next day he insisted that the rebels be followed at once and destroyed, but in his exultation he accepted philosophically Meade's failure to advance.

II

At this moment of rejoicing over Gettysburg and Vicksburg the city was horrified and humiliated by the Draft Riots, a sharp reminder that the home front was only less important than the battle front. Of this fact the *Evening Post* had never lost sight. Bryant's editorials always held in view the necessity of sustaining the spirits of the North. For every "radical" utterance criticizing the Administration's faults there were ten exhorting the people to support its central aims. In the first months of the war he published two martial lyrics, one addressed to European enemies who hoped for the ruin of the republic, and one a plea for enlistment:

> Few, few were they whose swords of old
> Won the fair land in which we dwell;
> But we are many, we who hold
> The grim resolve to guard it well.
> Strike, for that broad and goodly land,
> Blow after blow, till men shall see
> That Might and Right move hand in hand,
> And glorious must their triumph be!

It was natural for New York city to have a lusty anti-war press when the struggle for the Union began. It had been Democratic since Jackson's time, and remained Democratic during the Civil War. Its social connections

with the South had always been close, while till 1860 its merchants and bankers had stronger business ties with the South than with the West. After the war began many Southern sympathizers, refugees from the border States, settled in the city.

But the capture of Fort Sumter turned all that indifference to the secession movement which William H. Russell had noted a few weeks earlier into a passionate enthusiasm of the majority for the Federal cause. At 3 p. m. on April 18, the day the first troops passed through New York southward, an excited crowd gathered before the *Express* office and demanded a display of the American flag. It surged up Park Row and made the same demand of the *Day Book* and *Daily News* (the latter Fernando Wood's organ), and thence poured down Nassau Street and Broadway to the *Journal of Commerce* building, which also hurried out a flag. Already the *Herald* had decorated its windows with bunting. The Monday after Sumter, Bennett had braved popular feeling with another demand for peace, but now he hurried to Washington, pledged his support of the Union to President Lincoln, and saw that beginning with the *Herald* for April 17, that policy was adopted.

Unfortunately, the tone of the pro-slavery press continued so objectionable that on Aug. 22, 1861, the post-office forbade mail transportation to the *Journal of Commerce, Day Book, Daily News, Freeman's Journal,* and *Brooklyn Eagle,* all five of which had been presented by a Federal Grand Jury. The *Daily News* was suppressed in New Jersey by the Federal Marshal. Gerard Hallock of the *Journal of Commerce,* complaining of threats of violence and an organized movement to cut off his subscribers and advertising, sold his interest to David Stone and Wm. C. Prime, and the paper became less offensive. The *Day Book* permanently and the *Daily News* temporarily ceased publication. The foreign-language press also failed to show due patriotism, many French citizens in August signing a petition for the suppression of the *Courrier des États Unis* as disloyal, and the Westchester

grand jury presenting the *Staats-Zeitung* and *National-Zeitung* as disseminators of treason. The *World,* changing hands, became under the able Manton Marble, who had recently been an employee of the *Post,* a leader of the "copperhead" press.

There is no need to quote from the *World, Daily News,* and *Journal of Commerce* to show how, boldly when they dared, covertly when they did not, they continued to attack the Union cause. Their methods were defined by the *Evening Post* of May 20, 1863, in a "Recipe for a Democratic Paper," which may be briefly summarized:

(1) Magnify all rebel successes and minimize all Federal victories; if the South loses 18,000 men say 8,000 men, and if the North loses 11,000 say 21,000.

(2) Calumniate all energetic generals like Sherman, Grant, and Rosecrans; call worthless leaders like Halleck and Pope the master generals of the age.

(3) Whenever the Union suffers a reverse, declare that the nation is weary of this slow war; and ask how long this fratricidal conflict will be allowed to continue.

(4) Expatiate upon the bankruptcies, high prices, stock jobbers, gouging profiteers and "shoddy men."

(5) Abuse Lincoln and the Cabinet in two ways: say they are weak, timid, vacillating, and incompetent; and that they are tyrannous, harsh, and despotic.

(6) Protest vehemently against "nigger" brigadiers, and the atrocity of arming the slaves against their masters.

(7) Don't advise open resistance to the draft. But clamor against it in detail; suggest doubts of its constitutionality; denounce the $300 clause; say that it makes an odious distinction between rich and poor; and refer learnedly to the military autocracies of France and Prussia.

The copperhead politicians were as active as the copperhead press. At their head was Mayor Wood, who ran for reëlection in the fall of 1861 and was opposed by Bryant's friend George Opdyke. Called a blackguard by the *Tribune* and a miscreant by the *Evening Post,* Wood based his campaign upon denunciation of the abolitionists

and appeals to racial prejudice. In a speech reported by the *Post* of Nov. 29 he declared that Lincoln had brought the nation to the verge of ruin, that the negro-philes would prosecute the war as long as they could share the money spent upon it, and that "they will get Irishmen and Germans to fill up the regiments under the idea that they will themselves remain at home to divide the plunder." Just before election day the *Post* gave part of its editorial page to the following bit of drama:

FERNANDO IN A PORTER HOUSE

AN OCCURRENCE UP-TOWN; NOT A FANCY SKETCH

(Scene: A porter house in the 22d ward. Proprietor behind the counter. Behind him a row of bottles, etc. Enter Fernando and a voter.)

Fernando: Good morning, my dear friend. Please let me and my friend have something to drink. *(Glasses are set before them and a decanter. They help themselves. Fernando throws a double eagle upon the counter, waving away the offer to give back change.)* *You will support me, I suppose?*

Proprietor (quietly depositing the money in the till): "Yes, I shall support you for the State prison. You have been up for a place there, I believe.

Fernando (going out and coming back): By the way, you did not mean what you said just now?

Proprietor: Yes, I did mean just that. You deserve State prison and would have gone there three years ago if you had not cheated the law.

Fernando: Will you give me my change?

Proprietor: No, I will not. I want it to show my neighbors how you tried to influence my vote.

(Exit Fernando, crestfallen)

Opdyke, with the first war enthusiasm behind him, won the Mayoralty election from the egregious Wood. But the strength of the Democrats, which in large degree meant the strength of the anti-war party, was thereafter triumphant in every election till Grant took Richmond. The State and Congressional campaign of 1862, coming during the dark period after the Peninsular campaign and the drawn battle of Antietam, aroused the *Evening*

Post, Times and *Tribune* to great exertions. Horatio Seymour, the "submissionist" candidate, contested the Governorship with Gen. James Wadsworth. His speeches, wrote Bryant, have a direct tendency to discourage our loyal troops and sustain the hopes of the South. The *Post* denied his echo of the *World's* and *Herald's* statements that the Administration was a failure. "It has been a grand and brilliant success. History will so account it." Lincoln, predicted the *Post,* need only give rein to the Northern determination, and his name "will stand on the future annals of his country illustrated by a renown as pure and undying as that of George Washington." But Seymour easily won, obtaining 54,283 votes in New York city against 22,523 given Wadsworth; and the Democrats swept the Congressional districts, including one in which they had nominated Fernando Wood.

One factor in this result, said the *Evening Post,* was the alarm many had taken at the threat of the draft. The *World* played upon this alarm, and both it and the *Herald* attacked the emancipation proclamation as a change in the objects of the war; to which Bryant replied that the Revolution had begun to assert the rights of the Colonies within the British Empire, and had shortly become a war to take them out of it. Bryant in the spring of 1863 characterized the *Express* as an organ "which has called repeatedly upon the mob to oust the regular government at Washington, and upon the army to proclaim McClellan its chief at all hazards"; while the *Journal of Commerce,* he said, "has always denounced the war, and even now argues . . . that the allegiance of the citizens is due to the State, and not to the Federal Government." Some of the most prominent men of the city—Tilden, James Brooks, S. F. B. Morse, August Belmont, David E. Wheeler, and others —met at Delmonico's on Feb. 6, 1863, and formed a plan for circulating copperhead doctrines, or, as they put it, for "the diffusion of knowledge"; whence the *Post* nicknamed them "diffusionists."

When the Draft Act was enforced throughout the North just after Gettysburg, disorders occurred in widely scattered centers; and it was inevitable that they should be gravest in New York. Not merely did the city contain many half disloyal Americans of native birth. It was full of a class of Irishmen who had proved especially responsive to the demagogues opposing the war. Clashes between the Irish and negroes had been common for a decade. In August, 1862, a mob in Brooklyn attacked a factory in which blacks were working, and tried to set it afire with the negroes inside. Similar riots, the *Post* remarked, had disgraced several Western cities. "In every case Irish laborers have been incited to take part in these lawless attempts; and the cunning ringleaders and originators of these mutinies, who are not Irishmen, have thus sought to kill two birds with one stone—to excite a strong popular prejudice against the Irish, while they used them to wreak their spite against the blacks."

The copperhead press in the early July days preceding the first drawing of draft numbers was filled with abuse of conscription. The *Herald,* to be sure, which professed neutrality between the "niggerhead" press (the *Evening Post, Times,* and *Tribune*) and the copperhead papers, advocated the draft as a means of hastening Union victory, though it abused Lincoln as a nincompoop. But the *World* spoke of Lincoln's "wanton exercise of arbitrary powers," and predicted that if the war was carried on to enforce the emancipation proclamation a million men, not three hundred thousand, would have to be conscripted. "A measure," it said of the Draft act, "which could not have been ventured upon in England even in those dark days when the press-gang filled the English ships of war with slaves . . . was thrust into the statute books, as one might say, almost by force." The *Daily News* applauded the speeches at a city peace meeting on July 9, where one orator had declared: "The Administration now feels itself in want of more men to replace those it has slaughtered, and to aid it in upholding its despotism, and for this purpose has ordered the conscription."

On July 11, 1863, the draft began, and on the 13th, Monday, when an effort was made to renew it, the rioting commenced. The first disturbances occurred at the draft headquarters on the corner of Third Avenue and Forty-sixth Street, which were sacked about noon; the disorders grew much worse on Tuesday, and were not entirely suppressed until Thursday. The story of the four days of bloodshed need not be rehearsed in detail, but the *Evening Post* files afford certain new lights upon it. The historian Rhodes, in his account, draws upon the files of the *Tribune, Times, World, Herald,* and *Post* as sources, but only upon the issues of the week of the riot. Ten days later (July 23) an 8,000 word history of the riot appeared in the *Evening Post,* a close-knit, graphic narrative, apparently written by Charles Nordhoff, who had been an eye-witness of much of it.

Nordhoff makes it clear that the mob was against not merely the draft, but the war. "Seymour's our man"; "Seymour's for us"; "Yis, and Wood too"; "It's Davis and Seymour and Wood," were expressions heard at every turn. "Cheers for Jeff Davis were as common as brickbats." Above all, Nordhoff was convinced that the mob had intelligent leaders outside of its own ranks. The nucleus of the mob was a gang of about fifty rough fellows who at nine o'clock in the morning began prowling along the East River wharves in the Grand Street neighborhood, picking up recruits. As the crowd grew in size it entered foundries and factories for more men. "It is absolutely certain that there was no planning or directing head among the acting ringleaders. No one could follow or watch them without seeing that they were instigated; though by whom it was impossible to tell. They were men themselves incapable of self-direction; men of the lowest order and of the most brutal passions—and at that doubly infuriated by rum." Immediately the destruction of the Third Avenue draft headquarters was complete, the mob split into three parts, which at once sought three important objectives, a fact which Nordhoff regarded as proving outside leadership.

One of the three mobs destroyed the Armory on Second Avenue at Twenty-First Street—this was on Monday at four p. m.; a second simultaneously demolished the draft office at Broadway and Twenty-ninth Street; and a third, the largest, sacked and burnt the Colored Orphan Asylum on Fifth Avenue. Meanwhile, small groups had begun hunting down negroes and clubbing them to death. Nordhoff describes a scene during the burning of the Colored Orphan Asylum:

> Opposite the Reservoir stood a knot of gentlemen, strangers to each other. Said one of them, a timid, clerical-looking man:
>
> "What are we coming to? Is this to go on? Whose family and dwelling is safe?"
>
> "How long is this to last?" asked another—who might have been a merchant.
>
> "I will tell you how long," replied a third, who looked like a Tammany alderman, but as respectably dressed as either of the others, and buttoning up his coat to his chin defiantly: "Just as long as you enact unjust laws."

The rioting, Nordhoff believed, might have been ended the first day by determined military forces. While ruffians at the Orphan Asylum were crying, "Kill the little devils!" a steady attack by a small armed force would have routed them. "The rioters evidently expected such an attack, and at one time, frightened by a squabble on their outskirts between a few firemen and a gang abusing a bystander, actually took to their heels, but returned to their work with cries of derision." The first charge was made by the police just after 4 p. m. at the La Farge Hotel, and the rioters ran like sheep, leaving about thirty dead or wounded. Nordhoff's observation that the pillaging was done mainly by women and boys, who took two hours to carry 300 iron bedsteads from the Orphan Asylum, was borne out by a news item printed by the *Post* during the riots:

HOW A HOUSE IS SACKED

> Having witnessed the proceedings of the rioters on several occasions . . . we describe them for the benefit of our readers.

Just after the surrender of Vicksburg it published (July 8) a defense of Grant from the charge that he drank heavily. It recalled the many evidences of his single-mindedness, alertness, and decision,and the fact that he had gained more victories and prisoners than any other commander. "If any one after this," it concluded, "still believes that Grant is a drunkard, we advise him to persuade the Government to place none but drunkards in important commands."

Years later the *Evening Post* related that while Grant lay before Vicksburg, a letter from a prominent Westerner assured the editors that the general and his staff had once gone from Springfield to Cairo in the car of the president of the Illinois Central, and that almost the whole party had got drunk, Grant worst of all. By a coincidence, while this letter was under discussion President Osborne of the Illinois Central entered the office. He characterized it as a malignant falsehood. "Grant and his staff did go down to Cairo in the President's car," he said; "I took them down myself, and selected that car because it had conveniences for working, eating, and sleeping on the way. We had dinner in the car, at which wine was served to such as desired it. I asked Grant what he would drink; he answered, a cup of tea, and this I made for him myself. Nobody was drunk on the car, and to my certain knowledge Grant tasted no liquid but tea and water."

After Grant was made commander-in-chief in March, 1864, and took charge in the East, the *Evening Post* was confident that victory was at hand. This faith increased during the summer. Bryant wrote Bigelow on June 15 that the North ought certainly to bring the war to an end within the year, at least so far as concerned all great military operations. On Sept. 3, just after Grant had asked for 100,000 additional men, he said editorially that if he were given them, peace might be won by Thanksgiving. The next day, when news had come that Sherman had captured Atlanta, the paper renewed the prophecy of an early triumph, changing the date, however, to

Christmas. It no longer grumbled over military nervousness and dilatoriness. It was disturbed by the state of the currency, which was making the public debt twice what it should have been; but its chief fear was that the men at the North in favor of a premature peace would rob the Union of the fruits of its bloody struggle.

As early as December, 1862, and January, 1863, Greeley had begun in the *Tribune* a movement for ending the war by foreign mediation between North and South. The following month Napoleon III actually made an offer of mediation, which Lincoln immediately refused. Advance news of it had been sent Bryant by Bigelow, and the *Post* was ready to speak vigorously against it. Greeley in July, 1864, again tried to initiate peace negotiations, and asked Lincoln to arrange a conference at Niagara with two Confederate "ambassadors" who were reported to be there, telling him that "our bleeding, bankrupt, almost dying country longs for peace, shudders at the prospect of fresh conscriptions, of further devastations, and of new rivers of human blood." The attitude of the *Evening Post* was contemptuous. "No," wrote Bryant as Greeley bought his ticket to Niagara, "the most effective peace meetings yet held are those which Grant assembled in front of Vicksburg, which Meade conducted on the Pennsylvania plains, which Rosecrans now presides over near Tullahoma; their thundering cannons are the most eloquent orators, and the bullet which wings its way to the enemy ranks the true olive branch."

There was some fear for the moment that the *Times* would join the *Tribune* in its readiness for peace without victory. Bryant wrote his wife on Sept. 7, 1864, that he had a good deal of political news which he could not put in his letter. "I wrote a protest against treating with the Rebel Government, which you will have seen in the paper. . . . I was told from the best authority that Mr. Lincoln was considering whether he should not appoint commissioners for the purpose, and I afterwards heard that Raymond of the *Times* had been in Washington to persuade Mr. Lincoln to take the step, and was willing him-

self to be one of the commissioners." Bryant's 1,500 word editorial, "No Negotiations With the Rebel Government," anticipated the arguments of Lincoln's message to Congress in December opposing any parley.

At this moment the Democratic party was carrying on its campaign for the Presidency upon a platform which declared the war a failure, and asserted that an armistice should be sought at the first practicable opportunity. It is true that McClellan, the party's candidate, had repudiated these planks. But when he did so, Fernando Wood had wanted at once to repudiate McClellan, saying that the platform was sound, and that the Democrats should call their Chicago Convention together again to seek a man who would stand upon it. The *Daily News*, edited by his brother Benjamin Wood, similarly upheld the platform. So did the *World*, which went to shocking lengths in attacking Lincoln; not content with calling his Administration ignorant and incompetent, it cast imputations upon his personal honesty, while in a phrase that became temporarily famous it remarked that the White House was "full of infamy." According to the *World*, the war could and should be stopped instantly. The South was ready to reënter the Union if only Lincoln would cancel his outrageous emancipation proclamation. "Are unknown thousands of wives yet to become widows, and unknown tens of thousands of children to become orphans, that Mr. Lincoln's positive violations of solemn pledges may be assumed by the people as their own?" Manton Marble argued throughout the campaign for an armistice, a convention of all the States, and an effort to conclude peace upon the basis of union and slavery. Emancipation, he asserted, meant "industrial disorganization, social chaos, negro equality, and the nameless horrors of a civil war."

In this election the *Evening Post* maintained a straight course. Early in the year Bryant had inclined to doubt, as did Beecher, Greeley, Thaddeus Stevens, George W. Julian, and a majority of Congress, whether Lincoln's renomination would be wise. This was a reflection in part

of his impatient "radicalism," in part of his attachment to Chase; and on March 25, 1864, he made one of many prominent Union men who wrote the Republican Executive Committee suggesting a postponement of the Convention until September. But no hint of this doubt entered the columns of the *Evening Post*. It never spoke of any other possible nomination than Lincoln's. Indeed, every one soon saw that the choice was inevitable, and Bryant cast whatever hesitation he felt, which was not much, behind him. "It was done in obedience to the public voice," he wrote Bigelow June 15, "a powerful *vis a tergo* pushed on the politicians whether willing or unwilling. I do not, for my part, doubt of his reëlection." By this time the *Evening Post* was ready to admit that the President had made fewer errors and seen more clearly than it had supposed. It wrote (Sept. 20):

> He has gained wisdom by experience. Every year has seen our cause more successful; every year has seen abler generals, more skillful leaders, called to the head; every year has seen fewer errors, greater ability, greater energy, in the administration of affairs. The timid McClellan has been superseded by Grant, the do-nothing Buell by Sherman; wherever a man has shown conspicuous merit he has been called forward; political and military rivalries have been as far as possible banished from the field and from the national councils. . . . While Mr. Lincoln stays in power, this healthy and beneficial state of things will continue. . . .

Throughout the campaign Parke Godwin did much public speaking. During October the *Post* published a weekly campaign newspaper addressed particularly to laboring men, which had an enormous circulation at one cent a copy; the edition the first week was 50,000. In its local result the election justified the labors of the copperhead press, for McClellan carried New York city by a vote double Lincoln's—78,746 to 36,673. But the national result showed how totally unrepresentative this anti-war press was of any extensive Northern sentiment. It proved that Bryant had been right in declaring in the *Post* of March 16, 1863, when Greeley and the *Tribune*

actually said the nation should give up if the campaign then beginning failed:

It certainly is remarkable how unable the newspapers of the country, even those of the largest circulation, have been to divert the public mind from a fixed determination to put down the rebellion by every possible means, and to allow no pause in the war until the integrity of the Union is assured. One class of journals has labored to show that the war for the Union is hopeless; the people have never believed them. One class has called for a revolutionary leader; the call has only excited a little astonishment, the people being satisfied to prosecute the war under the legal and constitutional authorities.

The last effort at a premature armistice, that made by the venerable Francis P. Blair, culminating in the Hampton Roads conference between Lincoln and Vice-President A. H. Stephens, was treated by the *Evening Post* like previous efforts. Blair was an old friend, but under the caption, "Fools' Errands," Bryant wrote (Jan. 10, 1865) that his gratuitous diplomacy might do much harm. "No, our best peacemakers yet are Grant, Sheridan, Thomas, Sherman, and Farragut, and the black-mouthed bulldogs by which they enforce their pretensions over more than half of what was once an 'impregnable' part of rebeldom." The final peace, the peace made by the black-mouthed bulldogs, was greeted by the *Post* three months later in fervent terms:

GLORY TO THE LORD OF HOSTS

The great day, so long and anxiously awaited, for which we have struggled through four years of bloody war, which has so often . . . dawned only to go down in clouds of gloom; the day of the virtual overthrow of the rebellion, of the triumph of constitutional order and of universal liberty,—of the success of the nation against its parts, and of a humane and beneficent civilization over a relic of barbarism that had been blindly allowed to remain as a blot on its scutcheon—the day of PEACE has finally come. . . .

Glory, then to the Lord of Hosts, who hath given us this final victory! Thanks, heartfelt and eternal, to the brave and noble

men by land and sea, officers and soldiers, who by their labors, their courage and sufferings, their blood and their lives, have won it for us. And a gratitude no less deep and earnest to that majestic, devoted, and glorious American people, who through all these years of trial have kept true to their faith in themselves and their institutions. . . .

IV

Throughout the Civil War the news pages were in charge of one of the most picturesque and able men ever employed by the paper, Charles Nordhoff. It was a trying position. O. W. Holmes wrote an essay in 1861 called "Bread and Newspapers," in which he described the state of mind in which the North lived, waiting but from one edition to another. The Civil War was the heroic age of American press enterprise, and while the *Evening Post* conducted a less extensive war establishment than the *Herald, Tribune,* or *Times*—the *Herald* spent $500,000 on its correspondence—Nordhoff saw that it maintained a creditable position. He stepped into the office just after Bigelow's departure, in 1861. Along with Bigelow the *Post* had just lost William M. Thayer. This young man, after a brilliant ten years partly in New York, partly as the only correspondent with the Walker filibustering expedition in Nicaragua, and partly in Washington, had quarreled with Isaac Henderson, while at the same time his health failed; and he was glad to be appointed consul at Alexandria. Nordhoff's chief assistant in gathering news became Augustus Maverick, a veteran newspaper man previously with the *Times.*

Nordhoff, though only thirty years old in 1831, had already passed through enough adventure to fill an active lifetime. He was born in Prussia, where his father was a wealthy liberal who had served in Blucher's army and had later set up a school at Erwitte. Compelled for political reasons to leave, the elder Nordhoff gathered together all his funds, about $50,000, and reached America in 1834. The family went to the Mississippi Valley, and for a time lived an anomalous life, eating in the wilderness from rich silver and drinking imported German

mineral water. The boy was left an orphan at the age of nine, and was reared by the Rev. Wilhelm Nast of the Methodist Church in Cincinnati. Revolting against the rigid ecclesiastical discipline to which he was subjected, believing that his health was suffering from indoors work, and longing for the adventures at sea of which he had read in Marryat and Cooper, in 1844 he ran away.

Hundreds of thousands of American boys in the last half century have read the three books in which Nordhoff graphically relates his experiences aboard men of war, merchant ships, a whaler, and a cod-fishing boat. The story of how he went to sea is an interesting illustration of his pluck and persistence. He had $25, two extra shirts, and an extra pair of socks when he left Cincinnati, and his money took him to Baltimore. At every vessel to which he applied he was met by the same rebuff: "Ship you, you little scamp? Not I; we won't carry runaway boys. Clear out!" Undaunted, he went on to Philadelphia, and found a place on the *Sun* as printer's devil, at $2-4 a week and his board. He confided his ambition to no one, but every Saturday afternoon he was down among the shipping, looking for a place. Finally he heard that the Frigate *Columbus*, 74 guns, was about to sail under Commodore Biddle for the Far East, and sought a berth—again in vain. Still undiscouraged, he induced the editor of the *Sun*, to whose home he daily took a bundle of proofs, to introduce him to Commodore Elliot. The editor's note ran, "Please give him a talking to," and the gruff officer scolded the boy roundly for wanting to ruin his life, described the dissolute, brutalizing existence of most sailors, and flatly refused him a place. But Nordhoff returned daily until the Commodore yielded.

The boy soon realized that the sailor's life had little of the romance that Cooper gave it, but he showed both his grit and shrewdness when with a distinct literary intention he made the most of it. He went around the world in the *Columbus*, and was discharged at Norfolk in 1848; for several years he worked in the merchant marine, visiting Europe, Asia, South America, Australia,

and the South Sea islands; sailing from Sag Harbor in a whaler which cruised in the Indian Ocean, he deserted at the Seychelles, and for a time supported himself as a boatman in Mauritius; and he finished his eight years at sea by a brief period with the Cape Cod fishermen. All the while he was busy collecting material for his books, losing no opportunity to share new sights and experiences, and pumping his mates for their stories. He wrote his three volumes to give a common-sense picture of a life which he believed had been unduly romanticized; and his pictures of flogging in the navy, of dysentery and cholera aboard a frigate, of the degradation of the naval discipline, of the danger and hardship met on a merchant craft, and of the intolerable monotony of whale-hunting, carry out the purpose. It was good preliminary training for a reporter and editor. In 1853 he entered journalism, first on the Philadelphia *Register* and later on the Indianapolis *Sentinel,* meanwhile writing the sea books, which gave him such a reputation that in 1853 George W. Curtis recommended him to Harper's as an editorial worker.

Bigelow in the closing days of 1860 made an arrangement with Brantz Meyer, a Baltimore writer of some reputation, to go South for $50 a week and his expenses to do special reporting. He wrote R. B. Rhett, editor of the Charleston *Mercury,* asking whether it would be safe for Meyer to attend the secession convention in Charleston, and Rhett assured him that "no agent or representative of the *Evening Post* would be safe in coming here"; "he would certainly be tarred and feathered and made to leave the State, as the mildest possible treatment"; "he would come with his life in his hand, and would probably be hung." Nevertheless, the *Post* did have unsigned correspondence from Charleston and other Southern cities during the days the secession movement was ripening. When war began, Nordhoff hurriedly whipped a corps of special writers into shape. He requested Henry M. Alden, later editor of *Harper's* to go to the Virginia front, but Alden's health was too precari-

ous to permit him to face the hardships which other young literary men like E. C. Stedman were undertaking. William C. Church, a rising young journalist, who later established the *Army and Navy Journal* and the *Galaxy*, was obtained. Philip Ripley made another of the staff, and Walter F. Williams was soon sending admirable letters from the field.

Repeatedly during the war the *Post* scored notable "beats." Church was with the joint military and naval expedition under Sherman and Dupont that captured Port Royal, and sent the *Evening Post* the first account published at the North. The best picture of the battle of Pittsburgh Landing in any newspaper was one contributed the *Post* by a member of Halleck's staff. The most graphic running account of Sherman's march to the sea was also that furnished the paper by Major George Nichols, who was on Sherman's staff, and who later reworked his letters—in which it has been well said the style is photographic, with a touch of national music in the sentences—into a book. When John Wilkes Booth was killed in the burning Virginia barn by Sergeant Boston Corbett, Nordhoff obtained Corbett's exclusive story of the event—an absorbing three-quarters column of close print. It need not be said that the Paris correspondence which E. L. Godkin, later editor, furnished in 1862, offered the shrewdest and clearest view of French opinion published in any American newspaper. There was a large group of occasional correspondents at various points along the wide fighting line. The *Evening Post* profited, in a way that it was quite impossible for the *Herald* to do, from the kindness of loyal Union men of prominence who came into contact with great events or figures, and without thought of remuneration wrote to Bryant. A long and highly interesting article embodying personal reminiscences of Lincoln, for example, was contributed a few weeks after the assassination by R. C. McCormick, then well known in New York political circles. There were frequent bits like the following from a

New Yorker who had seen Grant at City Point (Aug. 5, 1864):

"General," I remarked, "the people of New York now feel that there is one at the head of our armies in whom they can repose the fullest confidence."

"Yes," he interrupted, "there is a man in the West in whom they can repose the utmost confidence, General Sherman. He is an able, upright, honorable, unambitious man. We lost another one of like character a few days ago, General McPherson."

One reporter for the *Post*, a young Vermonter named S. S. Boyce, became intimate with the United States Marshal in New York, and distinguished himself by important detective service against disloyalists. The Marshal once handed him a letter taken upon a captured blockade runner, mailed from New York and giving the Southern authorities the time of the sailing of the Newbern expedition. It carried no New York address, but within a fortnight Boyce had tracked down the writer of the letter, and some months later witnessed his hanging.

Many traditions long survived in the office of Nordhoff's energy, courage, shrewdness, and impassivity in moments of excitement. He was a man of the world, and his sense for news was amazing. Expected to contribute to the editorial page as well as manage the news staff, he would seat himself at his desk and write with unresting hand, meanwhile puffing a black cigar so furiously that he could hardly see his sheet through the smoke. A bluff seamanlike quality was always distinguishable about him; he walked with a sailor's roll, and used nautical terms with unconscious frequency. His executive ability, geniality, fearlessness, and intense hatred of anything equivocal or underhanded, made the staff love him. Mr. J. Ranken Towse, who knew him after the war, says that "he had a comprehensive grasp of essential knowledge, a great store of common sense, a rare faculty of penetrating insight, and a huge scorn for prevarication or double-dealing. A mistake due to ignorance or carelessness he could and often did overlook, but anything in the nature

of a shuffling excuse roused him to flaming ire. He was impetuous and irascible, but naturally generous and tender-hearted."

During the Draft Riots Nordhoff connected a hose with the steam-boiler in the basement and gave public notice that any assailant would meet a scalding reception. He had not only the *Evening Post* property to protect, but a score of wounded soldiers in a temporary hospital fitted up on an upper floor. The strain under wihch he lived in the war days was intense, and he used to spend the summer nights on a small sailboat which he kept on the Brooklyn waterfront, for he could sleep more soundly drifting about the bay than on shore. Yet he managed to find time to contribute to the newspaper's atmosphere of literary sociability. Paul Du Chaillu had become his friend when, as a worker at Harper's, he helped put some of Du Chaillu's books into good English, and a story survives of how Du Chaillu and Nordhoff once took possession of the restaurant stove across the street from the *Evening Post,* and taught the cook to broil bananas—the first bananas ever eaten cooked in the city. Nordhoff's impress was visible everywhere in the paper of those years, and its marked prosperity was in large degree traceable to his energy. The local reporting was better than ever before, and we are tempted to discern his own hand in the frequent human-interest paragraphs, of which one may be given as a specimen:

AN INCIDENT IN THE CARS

In a car on a railroad which runs into New York, a few mornings ago, a scene occurred which will not soon be forgotten by the witnesses of it. A person dressed as a gentleman, speaking to a friend across the car, said: "Well, I hope the war may last six months longer. In the last six months I've made a hundred thousand dollars—six months more and I shall have enough."

A lady sat behind the speaker, and . . . when he was done she tapped him on the shoulder and said to him: "Sir, I had two sons—one was killed at Fredericksburg; the other was killed at Murfreesboro."

She was silent a moment and so were all around who heard her. Then, overcome by her indignation, she suddenly slapped the

speculator, first on one cheek and then on the other, and before he could say a word, the passengers sitting near, who had witnessed the whole affair, seized him and pushed him hurriedly out of the car, as not fit to ride with decent people.

The Government censorship of news early became a painful and difficult question to all journals. Repeatedly during the war Northern papers allowed news to leak to the enemy which should have been kept strictly secret, and the *Evening Post* early recognized this danger. When Gen. McClellan in August, 1861, drew up his gentlemen's agreement with the press, the *Post* hoped that all editors would acquiesce in it, and attacked the Baltimore secession newspapers for giving the South important news. Two months later it blamed the *Herald* and *Commercial Advertiser* for twice having given prominence to articles they should have suppressed. Sherman as early as the summer of 1862 raged violently at the press in his private letters for writing some generals up and others down, and the *Post* had already (Feb. 27) commented upon the same abuse. The *Herald* in March, 1862, prematurely published the news of Banks's passage of the Potomac, to the great indignation of the *Post*, which had suppressed it the day before. But Nordhoff himself erred in September, when his publication of some "contraband" facts about the strength of the forces at Newbern brought a protest from Gen. Foster. No other mistake of the sort was made, and this one did not compare with the blunders of other New York journals. Early in 1863 a *Herald* correspondent, having foolishly printed the substance of some confidential orders, was convicted and sentenced to six months hard labor in the Quartermaster's Department. In November, 1864, the *Times* brought an angry protest from Grant by stating Sherman's exact strength and his programme in the coming march to the sea. The *Tribune* early the next year, informing its readers that Sherman was heading for Goldsboro, enabled Gen. Hardee on the Confederate side to fight a heavy battle which Sherman had hoped to avoid;

and the hero of the great march later refused to speak to Greeley.

But the *Evening Post* repeatedly protested against the undue severity of the censorship, just as it protested against improper interferences with personal liberty in other spheres. It complained that the rules laid down by Stanton and the field commanders were often capricious, and that by holding up harmless news they bred harmful rumors.

Thus on Sept. 1, 1862, New York was highly excited all afternoon by a canard that Pope had been pushed back to Alexandria and was being beaten by the Confederates within sight of Washington. Why? asked the *Evening Post* next day. It was because Stanton wanted all the correspondents kept away from the front, and the public was at the mercy of every rogue or coward who started a false report. The terrible disaster of Fredericksburg was concealed by the censorship in the most inexcusable way. The battle was fought on Saturday, the 13th of December. On the 14th and 15th there was no news; on the 16th the *Post* carried the bare statement that the army had recrossed the Rapphannock, which it optimistically interpreted as meaning that the heavy rains had swollen the river and imperilled the communications. On the 17th it knew that Burnside's forces had been flung back with terrible slaughter four days before, and it joined the chorus of the New York press in denouncing the official secrecy. The first authentic news of this battle was sent the *Tribune* by a future owner of the *Evening Post*, Henry Villard, who obtained it by an heroic all-night ride, and bringing it to Washington, evaded Stanton's order by sending it north by railway messenger.

Similar secrecy attended the early stages of the battle of Chancellorsville, causing needless agony of mind at the North and profiting only the stock-jobbers. Just before Gettysburg rumors were afloat of a heavy blow to Hooker. C. C. Carleton, said the *Post*, tried to wire his Boston paper, "Do not accept sensation dispatches," but the telegraph censor brusquely canceled this sensible mes-

sage. The Philadelphia editors and correspondents long surpassed all others in the picturesqueness of their lies, and the *Post* called attention to some of their masterpieces—e. g., their circumstantial story of the capture of Richmond by Gen. Keyes in 1862—as made possible by the censor's concealment of the real facts. Nordhoff complained that some of the paper's dispatches filed in the morning at 10:30 did not reach New York till 5 p. m., simply because the censor was out of his office or negligent. The worst count in the indictment, however, was that some great bankers got news of the battles by cipher, and used it in speculation while the people remained ignorant of the actual events.

With the Civil War came the first plentiful use of headlines in the *Evening Post*, usually placed on page three, where the telegraphic news was used. In those days verbs in headlines were conspicuous chiefly by their absence; but the writer knew his business. When the bombardment of Sumter began he summarized the whole significance of the event in his first two words: "CIVIL WAR — BOMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER—A DAY'S FIGHTING." After Bull Run he tried to save the feelings of New Yorkers by tactful phrasing: "RETROGRADE MOVEMENT OF OUR ARMY! —GEN. McDOWELL FALLING BACK ON WASHINGTON—OUR LOSS 2,500 to 3,000." And the two most important headlines of the whole war were admirable in their simple fitness. It would be impossible to improve upon the first three words used on April 15, "AN APPALLING CALAMITY — ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT—MR. LINCOLN SHOT IN FORD'S THEATRE IN WASHINGTON"; or upon the first three of April 10, "THE GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION—THE REBELLION ENDED—SURRENDER OF LEE."

Throughout the war the *Evening Post* was as distinguished for one feature—its poetry—as the *Herald* was for its admirable maps. Every writer of verse took inspiration from the conflict, and sent it to the only news-

paper conducted by a great poet. A few days after Sumter surrendered, the editors declared that if poetry could win the war, they already had enough to do it. Four years later, on April 13, 1865, they remarked that "we have received verses in celebration of the late victories enough to fill four or five columns of our paper."

Among the first war poems published by the *Evening Post* were two of genuine distinction, R. H. Stoddard's stirring call to war, "Men of the North and West," and Christopher Cranch's stanzas, "The Burial of Our Flag":

O who are they that troop along, and whither do they go?
Why move they thus with measured tread, while funeral trumpets blow?—
Why gather round that open grave in mockery of woe?

They stand together on the brink—they shovel in the clod—
But what is that they bury deep?—Why trample they the sod?
Why hurry they so fast away without a prayer to God?

It was no corpse of friend or foe. I saw a flag uprolled—
The golden stars, the gleaming stripes were gathered fold on fold,
And lowered into the hollow grave to rot beneath the mould.

Then up they hoisted all around, on towers, and hills, and crags,
The emblem of their traitorous schemes—their base disunion flags.
That very night there blew a wind that tore them all to rags!

And one that flaunted bravest by the storm was swept away,
And hurled upon the grave in which our country's banner lay—
Where, soaked with rain and stained with mud, they found it the next day.

From out the North a Power comes forth—a patient power too long—
The spirit of the great free air—a tempest swift and strong;
The living burial of our flag—he will not brook that wrong.

The stars of heaven shall gild her still—her stripes like rainbows gleam;
Her billowy folds, like surging clouds, o'er North and South shall stream.
She is not dead, she lifts her head, she takes the morning's beam!

* * * * * * * * *

Much verse came from writers of the rank of Alice and Phœbe Cary, who published nearly all their war poems in the *Post*. Mrs. R. H. Stoddard, still remembered as a novelist, wrote unfinished but sincere and touching poetry. Miles O'Reilly, whom Walt Whitman found the most popular writer of war verse among the troops, contributed repeatedly. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, leading his black troops in South Carolina, and recalling Bryant's "Song of Marion's Men," sent his graceful "Song from the Camp." Park Benjamin wrote much in the early years of the war, and before its close Helen Hunt Jackson began to appear in the *Evening Post's* pages. One of the most stirring songs of the conflict, "We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more," originally appeared in the *Evening Post* of July 16, 1862. Unsigned, many supposed it was the editor's. At a large Boston meeting the next night, Josiah Quincy read it as "the latest poem written by Mr. Wm. C. Bryant." Its actual author was John S. Gibbons, who for a time was financial editor of the *Post*, and wrote two volumes on banking.

Bryant himself published two hymns in the journal, "The Earth Is Full of Thy Riches" (1863) and "Thou Hast Put All Things Under His Feet" (1865). But the finest poetical contribution which he ever made to it was his "Death of Lincoln":

> O slow to smite, and swift to spare,
> Gentle and merciful and just!

which first saw the light in the *Evening Post* of April 20, 1865.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RECONSTRUCTION AND IMPEACHMENT

MOST of the metropolitan newspapers emerged from the Civil War with increased circulation, and several, like the *Evening Post,* with enhanced prosperity. The circulation was not high by present standards: when peace was declared the *Sun* was printing about 50,000 copies, the *Times* about 35,000, and the *Evening Post* about 20,000. But the influence of the New York press has never been larger, for four great journalists were then at the height of their reputation. Raymond of the *Times* had four more years to live, Bennett of the *Herald* and Greeley of the *Tribune* had seven, and Bryant, the oldest editor of all, thirteen. The younger generation was not quite yet needed—not until 1868 did Dana join the *Sun,* and Whitelaw Reid the *Tribune.*

When the problems of reconstruction presented themselves, everybody knew where the large group of Democratic journals would stand. The *Herald,* the *World,* the *Express,* and the *Daily News,* loyal to the grand old party of Polk and Buchanan, would urge the restoration of the Southern States to their former standing as quickly and gently as possible. The only real curiosity was as to the *Evening Post, Times,* and *Tribune.*

Having held the radical views of Chase and Sumner in the war, having constantly demanded more energy in its prosecution, the *Evening Post* might have been expected to advocate severity toward the South. For a time there were indications that it would do so. When Lincoln, just before his death, declared in favor of encouraging and perfecting the new State governments already set up in the South, saying "We shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it," Bryant was doubtful. "But if it should happen that these eggs are cocka-

trice's eggs, what then?" he demanded. For some months after Appomattox the *Post* expressed its wish that "traitors" like Jefferson Davis, Hunter, Benjamin, Wigfall, and Wise could be brought to trial; it was not necessary to put them to death—they could be pardoned if condemned—but justice demanded a stern arraignment.

Yet it soon became evident that the *Evening Post's* influence would be on the side of moderation and leniency. Bryant's fine obituary editorial on Lincoln struck this note clearly. He spoke of Lincoln's gentle policies:

> How skillfully he had avoided and postponed needless troubles, the ease and tranquillity of our return from a time of passionate conflict to a time of serene repose is a proof; how wisely he had contrived to put off the suggestions of an extreme or fanatical zeal everybody has been ready to acknowledge, for Mr. Lincoln brought to his high office no prejudice of section, no personal resentments, no unkind or bitter feelings of hatred, and throughout the trying time of his Administration he has never uttered one rancorous word toward the South. . . .
>
> The whole nation mourns the death of its President, but no part of it ought to mourn that death more keenly than our brothers of the South, who had more to expect from his clemency and sense of justice than from any other man who could succeed to his position. The insanity of the assassination, indeed, if it was instigated by the rebels, appears in the stronger light when we reflect on the generosity and tenderness with which he was disposed to close up the war, to bury its feuds, to heal over its wounds, and to restore to all parts of the nation that good feeling which once prevailed, and which ought to prevail again. Let us pray God that those who come after him may imitate his virtues and imbibe the spirit of his goodness.

The stand taken by Bryant's friend Chase, the poet's natural generosity, and the reports of a desire for reconciliation sent by Southern correspondents, caused the paper to assume an unflinching advocacy of President Johnson's mild policy, and to attack the harsh measures of Congress. In this attitude the *Times* was with it. The *Tribune* took the other side vehemently, and, in a more reasonable way, it was espoused by the city's three great weekly organs of opinion, E. L. Godkin's *Nation*,

Harper's Weekly, and the *Independent*, from which Henry Ward Beecher, disagreeing with Theodore Tilton's severe views, soon resigned.

Into the *Evening Post's* opinions upon the whole kaleidoscopic succession of bills and acts bearing upon reconstruction, from 1865 to 1868, it is impossible to go in detail. Its fundamental doctrine was fully outlined as early as May 2, 1865. The two great objects, it affirmed, were to depart as little as possible from the old-established principles of State government, and "to do nothing for revenge, nothing in the mere spirit of proscription." It believed that a convention should be called in each State to annul the ordinance of secession, and, by writing a new State Constitution, to repudiate the rebel debt, guarantee the negroes equal civil rights, and regulate the elective franchise according to immutable principles of certain application, discarding all arbitrary and capricious rules. The States should also ratify the anti-slavery amendment of the Federal Constitution by popular vote. "As soon as the political power has thus been regularly reconstituted the State, as a matter of course, resumes her relations to the Union, elects members of Congress, and stands in all respects on a footing with the States" of the North.

Urging this policy, Bryant and the *Evening Post* wished to end military rule at the South as quickly as possible, while the Congressional radicals, led by Wade and Thaddeus Stevens, like the *Tribune* and *Nation*, regarded its indefinite continuance as necessary. The *Evening Post* held that the illiterate negroes were unfit to vote and should be required to pass through a probationary period; it wished the Southern ballot based upon an educational test. The *Tribune* and the *Sun* supported full negro suffrage. When the first Southern States sent Representatives to Congress the *Evening Post*, like the *Times* and *World*, wished them admitted. The *World*, indeed, bitterly assailed the "rump" Congress which barred them. The *Evening Post*, *Times*, and *World* supported John-

son's veto of the Freedmen's Bureau bill, while the *Tribune* wrung its hands over such journalistic depravity.

There was some justification in the objection of *Harper's Weekly* that the *Post* was too "optimistic." Bryant appealed to the South to be magnanimous to the negro, and to set to work to educate him and make him the white man's equal. He was sure that "with their healthy native constitution, their long training to labor, their quick imitative faculties, their new motives to enterprise, the freedmen will grow into a most useful class." The *Post* underrated the enormous difficulties of the racial problem at the South. But its course was wisdom and humanity itself when compared with that of the Congressional extremists who insisted upon confiscation and disfranchisement. The *Tribune,* following these extremists, called the *Post* and *Times* "copperhead," an epithet which came with ill grace from a paper with the *Tribune's* war record. Greeley made an able defense of his policy in an address in Richmond in May, 1867, but the *Tribune* tended in the hands of his lieutenants to be more radical than Greeley himself.

In supporting Johnson, all the moderates found their chief enemy in Johnson himself. When he took the oath of office as Vice-President the authentic reports of his intoxication had caused the *Evening Post* to demand that he either resign or formally apologize to the nation. A year later, when he made an abusive speech saying that his opponents Sumner and Stevens had tried "to incite assassination," the journal again called for an apology to the people. The *Post* supported the Civil Rights bill of 1866, guaranteeing the negro equality before the law with the whites. When Johnson vetoed it, Bryant wrote in a hitherto unpublished letter to his daughter:

> The general feeling in favor of that bill is exceedingly strong, and the President probably did not know what he was doing when he returned it to Congress. He has been very silent since, as if the check of passing the bill notwithstanding his objections had stunned him. Mr. Bancroft says that he must have got some small lawyer to write his veto message, and Gen. Dix thinks that

the trouble at Washington lessens the eligibility of the President for a second term of office. So you see that those who supported Johnson's first veto fall off now. Poor Raymond seemed in great perplexity to know which way to turn. He supported the veto, but his paper commended it but faintly and admitted that something ought to be done from the standpoint of the rights of American citizenship when denied by the States.

When President Johnson removed the Governor of Louisiana that summer, the *Evening Post* condemned his act as unconstitutional. It was outraged by his dismissal of officeholders to influence the Congressional elections of 1866. His "swing around the circle," the famous speaking tour to Chicago and back in the early fall of 1866, in which he lost all sense of dignity, talked of hanging Thad Stevens, and abused his opponents as "foul whelps of sin," completely disgusted the *Post*. "It is a melancholy reflection," it said, "to those who have found it their duty to support that policy [Johnson's], that their most damaging opponent is the President, and that he makes a judicious course so hateful to the people that no argument is listened to. . . ." It marveled at his skill "to do the wrong thing at the wrong time, to displease everybody, and to delay that which everybody would be glad to have over." Moreover, as news arrived of widespread outrages against the negroes in the South, the *Post's* attitude toward that section grew less gentle.

Ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, the *Evening Post* urged the South in the summer of 1866; it is the only way to hasten sane reconstruction. When the Southerners, already denying the negroes their due place at the polls and in the courts, deliberately rejected the amendment, it was ready to give them a stiffer dose. In February, 1867, it pronounced in favor of the great Reconstruction Act, which divided the ten Southern States into five military districts, and undertook to guarantee the negro's rights by force. That is, the abuses perpetrated made it swing toward the Congressional standpoint—just as general Northern sentiment swung.

But when Congress determined to impeach President

Johnson, the protest of the *Evening Post* was as instant as that of the *Times* or *Sun*. The principal charges were based upon the President's alleged violations of the Tenure of Office Act, which prohibited him from dismissing civil officers without the consent of the Senate. When this Act was passed in July, 1867, the *Post* had called it a silly and mischievous attempt to make the President as powerless as the Mayor of New York, and had regarded it as unconstitutional. The early talk of impeachment it rebuked as threatening "a Mexican madness." Naturally, then, when Johnson defied Congress by dismissing Secretary Stanton without consulting the Senate, the editors took the view that his intention was merely to bring the act before the courts, and that he should not be impeached unless he persisted in further dismissals after the Supreme Court had decided against him. They had already written (Dec. 2) that the impeachment talk did not carry with it the public sense of justice, without which it must recoil upon the heads of its promoters, and that Congress had enough useful constructive work to do to keep it busy.

When impeachment was actually voted, the *Post's* comment was sorrowful rather than angry. "It is a quarrel in which there is really no very great substance," it said. "It is one that might easily have been avoided, and may be easily brought to an end."

This was the view of the *Sun*, which had just passed under the control of Dana, and which declared the impeachment "far too serious an undertaking for the facts and evidence in the case." It was likewise the opinion of the *Times*, which asked: "Must the President be punished for maintaining the authority of the Constitution against an invalid law?" The position of the *World* had its humorous aspects. So long as it had considered Johnson a Republican, it had found no abuse of him too violent. Even in June, 1865, it had called him "a drunken boor," "an insolent, vulgar, low-bred brute," and a man "not so respectable as Caligula's horse." Now, telling its readers that Congress was attempting to remove the

President "in the personal interest of Edwin M. Stanton," it could not be sufficiently impassioned in his defense. Mayor Hoffman voiced the same Democratic sentiment in saying that the impeachers of Johnson and the assassins of Lincoln would be equally infamous in history.

But the joy of the *Tribune* was unbounded, and in its references to the President it ran the gamut of denunciation, from "the Great Accidency" and "this bold, bad, malignant man" to "traitor." Its peroration of one ringing column editorial is a gem of its kind: "He is an aching tooth in the national jaw, a screeching infant in a crowded lecture room; and there can be no peace nor comfort until he is out." The *Nation*, originally opposed to impeachment, now approved it with only less gusto. Every one thought Johnson either a fool or a knave, its editor wrote, and his disappearance from the national stage would be a heartfelt relief to all. *Harper's Weekly*, assailing Johnson for treachery to the party, hoped that he would sink fast and forever into oblivion.

A contribution to calmness in the first moment of excitement was made by the *Evening Post* in an editorial entitled "What the People Think." There was no sustained perturbation, it believed; that sensitive barometer, the gold market, had quickly become as steady as ever. There was even a feeling of relief. Thinking of the solemnity of the constitutional process of impeachment, men were glad that the vindictive fight between the President and Congress "is now carried out of the political arena and into a higher place." The general public, including many Democrats, held that the President had acted wrongly, even if not in a degree deserving impeachment. But every one was saying that there must be no violence, and the trial must be quick, while there was an equally universal hope that, whatever its outcome, Congress would emerge with its fury vented and in a more reasonable state of mind.

At the outset the *Evening Post* and the *Times* were irritated by two assertions of the anti-Johnson radicals. The first was that the President might and should be

suspended from office pending the outcome of the trial. Not only was there no constitutional warrant for such action, wrote Bryant, but the question had been discussed in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and it had voted that Congress should have no such power of suspension. The *Tribune* held also that if the Senate, sitting as a High Court upon the President's disobedience to the Tenure of Office Act, declared the act unconstitutional, then its decision became forever binding. The Supreme Court would have no authority to pass upon the constitutionality of the act, and if it presumed to do so and to differ from the High Court, Congress would be justified in impeaching or removing the judges. This was too much for the *Nation* as well as the *Evening Post,* and Godkin promptly demolished the assertion. It should be said that Greeley at this time was absent in the West, and the *Tribune* was under the charge of John Russell Young, whose harshness Greeley later disapproved.

On Feb. 27, three days after the impeachment, the *Evening Post* declared that "the general impression is that the case is essentially prejudged, and that Mr. Johnson will be removed by the Senate." This was the opinion of all the city's organs, from the radical *Nation* on the one side to the *World* on the other. The *World,* in fact, made an appeal for a fund of $10,000,000, with which to bribe those Senators who could hardly hope for reëlection anyhow; and while this was a bit of humor—the *Tribune* alone took it seriously—its point lay in the *World's* conviction that the Republican Senators were all so prejudiced that only millions could win over a few of them. Like the *Nation,* the *Post* devoted an editorial to a scrutiny of the qualifications of Benjamin Wade, who as President pro tem. of the Senate would succeed Johnson. Bryant admitted Wade's honesty, courage, and frankness, but regretted that in impetuosity, narrowness, and prejudice he would be too much like the man he replaced. His manners, too, must be mended, for he recalled a Scotch lady's remark: "Our Jock sweers awfu', but nae doot it's a great set-off to conversation."

As the trial progressed the *Evening Post* was gratified to find that the case was much less nearly prejudged than it had supposed. Disappointed by the lack of eloquence on both sides, it was pleased by the efficiency of Evarts, Stanbery, and others of the President's counsel in displaying the strength of their case. They made it plain that Johnson's intention in dismissing Stanton had not been to defy Congress and the law wantonly, but to obtain a judicial test of the Tenure of Office Act. They showed also that some anti-Johnson Senators had, while the Act was pending, expounded the view that it did not protect men held over from Lincoln's Cabinet, like Stanton. The *Post* on April 22 credited the Senate with having dealt fairly with the accused and having admitted all the evidence in his favor.

The breakdown of the case against Johnson was gall and wormwood to the more bitter newspaper partisans of Congress. Theodore Tilton's *Independent* read Chief Justice Chase, who impartially presided over the trial, out of the party. The *Tribune* was trembling for "the very existence of the government." Never noted for gentleness of retort, it now accused Horatio Seymour of "gigantic, deliberate, atrocious lies"; the *Herald* of "falsehoods"; the *World* of "dodges and prevarications"; and the *Times* and *Post* again of being "copperhead." The *Times* remonstrated. Pointing out that Greeley was to preside at the Dickens dinner, as the representative of the American press, it said that he should remember that it was not in the dignity of a gentleman to use the word "liar." Greeley replied that the truth was not a question of taste, but of flat morality, and that he would never be mealy-mouthed in its defense.

The seven Republican Senators who finally determined to vote against conviction were Fessenden, Lyman Trumbull, Henderson, Fowler, Van Winkle, Grimes, and Ross. It is the belief of all later historians that their courageous and just action is one of the finest episodes of the sordid reconstruction period. But a storm of anger broke upon

them in Washington. It was on May 16 that the voting began. Four days earlier the *Tribune,* flying into a panic, declared that a hundred men had been under pay in Washington since the trial began to cry down impeachment and bet against conviction. It accused Lyman Trumbull of being to blame, and insinuated that his motives were venal: "but a few weeks ago he was paid $5,000 for arguing the constitutionality of the Reconstruction laws. . . . Republicans ask to-night what the guerdon is for defending the President in the impeachment trial." Let President Johnson, the incarnation of Treason and Slavery, be acquitted, it added, and he becomes King; as yet he could be removed by law, but "your next attempt will be a revolution." Next day, May 13, the *Tribune* headed an editorial attack upon Senator Grimes, who had defended Johnson, "Judas's Thirty Reasons," and concluded: "We have had Benedict Arnold, Aaron Burr, Jefferson Davis, and now we have James W. Grimes!" It categorically accused Senator Fowler of accepting a bribe, and it called Henderson and Ross suspect.

Perhaps the best retort was that of the *Times,* in an editorial debating the question who was the most colossal criminal of the century, and concluding that Senator Ross closely resembled Sennacherib. But a serious answer was necessary, and a dozen indignant journals, including the *Nation* and *Harper's Weekly,* replied to this temporarily misguided oracle of a half-million readers. The *Post's* editorial of May 13 was headed, "Coercing a Court"; and in it and an editorial of the next day it graphically described the pressure brought to bear upon the independent Senators, and condemned the attacks against them as undermining both the impartiality of judicial tribunals, and the principle that an accused man shall be believed innocent until proved guilty. It anticipated the verdict of history:

> With whom is the sober second thought of the people most likely to agree—with the *Tribune* and Gen. Butler, or with such

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BRYANT AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FAME AS EDITOR

DURING all but the hottest months of the year, in the latter part of Grant's second Administration, men on lower Broadway at about 8:45 every week-day morning might see a venerable figure come rapidly down toward Fulton Street. The aged pedestrian was slender and just above the middle height, but was given an impressive aspect by his heavy white beard and the long hoary hair that swept his shoulders. As he passed, it could be seen that his brow was bald; that his forehead was projecting, though not massive; that the deep-set eyes which peered from beneath his bushy brows were remarkably penetrating and observant, and that his features were rugged but benignant. He had a scholar's stoop, but appeared wiry and vigorous far beyond his years. People glanced at him with respectful recognition—his was, as Tennyson said of Wellington, the good gray head that all men knew. On Fulton Street he turned into a tall, new building, and those who watched might see that, disdaining the elevator, he began rapidly climbing the stairs. This was William Cullen Bryant, at eighty still devoting four hours daily to the *Evening Post*.

Bryant had long since become the most distinguished resident of the city, referred to and honored as its first citizen. In civic, charitable, and social movements his name was given precedence over those of men like William M. Evarts or Henry Ward Beecher. On every great public occasion an effort was made to obtain his attendance as the representative of all that was choicest in literary, artistic, and professional life. When the artist Cole, and the authors Cooper, Irving, Verplanck, and Halleck died, he was chosen to deliver memorial discourses of that kind in which the French excel; he was

the chief speaker at the dedication of the Morse, Shakespeare, Scott, Goethe, and Mazzini monuments in Central Park; and he presided over the testimonial benefit given Charlotte Cushman when she was about to retire from the stage, which occasioned one of the most notable assemblages ever brought into a modern theater. No New York meeting in behalf of free trade, sound money, or civil service reform was complete without his presence or a message from him. This high position was his because he was not merely a great poet, but a great publicist.

On Nov. 5, 1864, when Bryant had just attained his seventieth birthday, a celebration was held at the Century Club, of which he had been one of the earliest members. The historian Bancroft presided, and among the speakers were Emerson, Holmes, R. H. Stoddard, Julia Ward Howe, R. H. Dana, jr., and William M. Evarts; while poems were received from Whittier and Lowell. The editor as well as the poet was honored. Mrs. Howe recited:

> . . . at his forge he wrought two-fold,
> On the iron shield of freedom, and the poet's links of gold.

while Lowell's well-known verses, "On Board the Seventy-six," referred to his editorial words of cheer during the gloomy early days of the Civil War. A little more than three years later (Jan. 30, 1868), a dinner was tendered Bryant at Delmonico's as president of the American Free Trade League. Speeches were made in his honor by David Dudley Field, Parke Godwin, John D. Van Buren, and others, and letters read from Emerson and Gerrit Smith. Again, on Nov. 3, 1874, when Bryant became eighty years old, he was quietly finishing a forenoon's work in the *Evening Post* office when a deputation of friends entered to congratulate him. That evening there was another celebration at the Century Club, at which a commemorative vase—now in the Metropolitan Museum—was given Bryant, while a simultaneous celebration was held in Chicago by the Literary Club of that city.

In the dozen years following Sumter, and especially in the Civil War years when it pressed its demand for energetic prosecution of the struggle, the *Evening Post* was at the height of its influence under Bryant. "The clear and able political leaders have been of more service to the government in this war than some of its armies," said *Littell's Living Age* in 1862. Charles Dudley Warner wrote at the same time in the Hartford *Press*: "The *Evening Post* is the most fearless and rigidly honest paper in the country, and its ability is equal to its moral worth. Some of its ordinary editorials are magnificent specimens of English." A chorus of praise was aroused by the enlargement of the journal this year. "*The Evening Post,* we think, is the best newspaper in the United States," remarked the Elmira *Advertiser;* the New Bedford *Standard* spoke of "the best paper in the United States, the *Evening Post*"; the Kennebec *Journal* said that "All things considered, it comes the nearest to our idea of what a metropolitan journal should be of any publication in the country"; and the *Christian Enquirer* testified that "the course of the *Evening Post* during the war has been above all praise—firm, bold, patriotic, and wise."

Similar tributes were paid the newspaper by a remarkable array of public men. In 1840 James K. Paulding wrote from Washington to console it for defeat in the Presidential election: "The manner in which the *Evening Post* is conducted, its stern and sober dignity, and its freedom from the base fury and still baser falsehoods, with which so many newspapers are debauched and disgraced, makes me proud to remember that I have a humble claim to be associated with its honors." Sumner was constant in his praise in the fifties. Judge William Kent, son of the great Chancellor, not merely thought it the best American daily, but in 1857 proposed that he purchase a share in it and become one of the editors, a proposal which Isaac Henderson discouraged. William Jay in 1862 wrote Bryant, paying tribute to its "powerful and beneficial influence." Charles Eliot Norton begged the following year "to express my hearty sympathy with the

principles maintained by the *Evening Post* at this time, and my admiration for the ability with which they are sustained." A little later Lowell wrote Bryant that he was a subscriber. "I am particularly pleased with the course of the *Evening Post* on reconstruction. Firmness equally tempered with good feeling is what we want—not generosity with twitches of firmness now and then." W. H. Furness, the noted Philadelphia minister, sent another unsolicited tribute in the heat of the war, saying that he valued the *Tribune,* but was particularly grateful for the sound, calm vision of the *Evening Post,* and that "it stands in my esteem at the head of the American press. It is cheering that there is abroad such an educator of the public mind." Caleb Cushing wrote (1868):

> You may regard it as quite superfluous for me to speak in commendation of the *Evening Post;* but inasmuch as, at one period, I had reason to think and to assert that its language was occasionally overharsh to me, I desire to say, for my own satisfaction, not yours, with how great instruction and pleasure at present I read it every day, and with what daily increasing estimation of its superior dignity, fairness, wisdom, and truth.

Even abroad the paper was well known. Bigelow informed Bryant in 1864 that an Englishman had told him he thought it the best newspaper in the world. John Stuart Mill wrote Parke Godwin the following year that he was a regular reader of it through the kindness of Frederick Barnard, later President of Columbia, who thought it the best American daily, and that he had formed a high opinion of it.

If we ask what qualities made Bryant a great editor, we must place mere industry high on the list. Within a few years after his return to the prostrate *Post* in 1836 he had shaken off his distaste for the profession, and acquired a zest for it. From 1836 to 1866 he labored as hard upon his journal as if he had never written a line of verse—as the hardworking Greeley and Bennett did upon theirs. Always up in summer at five, in winter at five-thirty, he was frequently at his desk at seven, and

seldom later than eight. His principal concern, the editorial page, was in itself a day's work. He took in hand during this period nearly all the leading editorials. They were consistently longer than editorials of to-day, not infrequently in the fifties and sixties reaching 1,600 words, sometimes 1,800; and Bryant, conscious of his reputation, wrote with painful care. "As Dr. Johnson said of his talk," he once told Bigelow, "I always write *my best.*"

But in his first forty years as editor Bryant also attended to a multitude of business and executive details. This was of course true in the thirties and forties, when the *Evening Post* was a struggling journal with a staff of three or four writers; but his unpublished papers show it almost equally true later. In his late fifties we find him carefully discussing by letter with John Bigelow whether the commercial reporter should get more than $900 a year; hiring the foreign correspondents, and resentful when the *Tribune* stole one of the best, Signora Jesse White Mario; and taking a keen interest in the fluctuations of advertising. We find him complaining of the daily squabble between the editorial room and advertising department, with the sturdy German head of the composing room, Henry Dithmar, parrying all attempts to displace advertisements by reading matter (1860). He was laying plans as the Civil War storm arose to get out a third edition, to occupy the same ground as the third edition of the *Express,* and considering ways and means of putting the first edition on the street in time to beat the *Commercial.* He kept a watchful eye upon all employees, now meting out praise and blame to the Washington and Albany correspondents, and now deciding indulgently what should be done with an office boy who was caught carrying off a dozen review copies of new books. When it grew necessary to enlarge the *Post* he knew just what it would cost to alter the "turtles," and just why the importers and wholesalers preferred a journal of four blanket-size pages to one of eight smaller pages.

He had to answer an enormous correspondence, a task

conscientiously performed. A hurried message to Dithmar is preserved: "Enclosed is the lady's communication. I have looked two hours for it. Put it in and get me out of trouble." He received a multitude of visitors. A note to his wife in 1851 remarks, "I was run down yesterday"—arriving to write a leader, he had been interrupted by five important and several lesser visitors. Sometimes the burden upon him was excessive. It was so after 1836, just before Bigelow came in the late forties, and at intervals later, such as early in 1860, when Bigelow was in Europe, Thayer was sick, Godwin was laid up with rheumatic fever, and Bryant had a sty into the bargain.

His industry was made possible by the fact that he had an admirable constitution, which he was at pains to preserve, and by his wise insistence upon recreation. In his early manhood he was a vegetarian. A letter of 1871 describing his mode of life shows by what a careful regimen he preserved his bodily and mental vigor. He still rose between four-thirty and five-thirty, according to season. While half-dressed, he spent a half hour in calisthenics with a pair of dumbbells, a light pole, a horizontal bar, and a chair. After bathing, he breakfasted on some cereal—hominy, wheat grits, or oatmeal—and milk, with baked apples in summer, and sometimes buckwheat cakes. He never touched tea or coffee. After breakfast, when in town, he walked three miles down to the *Evening Post* office, and doing his morning's work, returned, "always walking, whatever be the weather or the state of the streets." In the country he divided his time between literary work and outdoor employments. When in the city he made but two meals a day, and in the country three, although the middle meal consisted only of a little bread and butter, with possibly some fruit; the meat or fish that he took at dinner was in very sparing quantities. In later manhood he made it a rule to avoid every kind of literary occupation in the evening, finding that it interfered with his sleep; while he went to bed in town as early as ten, and in the country still earlier. A short

time before his death, when he was eighty-three, Bigelow asked him if he had not reduced his period of morning gymnastics. "Not the width of your thumb-nail," was his reply.

Bryant found his most congenial recreation not in the theater or society, but country employments. When youth passed into middle age he still liked all-day or week-end rambles up the Hudson or in the Catskills. After the purchase of his Roslyn home in 1842 he seldom failed, from April to October, to spend two or three days a week resting, gardening, draining, planning, and writing there. His most charming letters show him visiting his pigs and chickens, picking strawberries, treating children to his cherries, superintending the pruning, and bathing in the Sound when the tide met the grass.

The editor viewed his calling as a jealous mistress, declining all suggestions of public office or any other diversion from it. In 1861 it was rumored that Lincoln wished to appoint him Minister to Spain, and the *Post* promptly disposed of the suggestion that he would accept. "Those who are acquainted with Mr. Bryant know," it said, "that there is no public office from that of the Presidency of the United States downward which he would not regard it as a misfortune to take. They know that he has expected no offer of any post from the government, and would take none if offered." Grant also would have given him an important diplomatic position had he been ready to receive it. In 1872 it was thought necessary to publish the following tactful

CARD FROM MR. BRYANT

Certain journals of this city have lately spoken of me as one ambitious of being nominated for the Presidency of the United States. The idea is absurd enough, not only on account of my advanced age, but of my unfitness in various respects for the labors of so eminent a post. I do not, however, object to the discussion of my deficiencies on any other ground than that it is altogether superfluous, since it is impossible that I should receive any formal

nomination, and equally impossible, if it were offered, that I should commit the folly of accepting it.

New York, July 8, 1872. WM. C. BRYANT.

He avoided those controversial by-ways into which Greeley, as in his debate with Henry J. Raymond upon Socialism, so eagerly rushed. In 1860 the country's foremost economist, Henry C. Carey, challenged him to a joint discussion of the tariff, and the *Post* replied that Bryant never accepted such invitations. "His duties as a journalist and a commentator on the events of the day and the various interesting questions which they suggest, leave him no time for a sparring match with Mr. Carey . . .; and he has no ambition to distinguish himself as a public disputant. His business is to enforce important political truths, and to refute what seem to him errors, just as the occasions arise. . . ." A time more malapropos for a long tariff debate could hardly have been selected.

It was part of Bryant's creed that the profession to which he devoted his life should be treated as one of elevated dignity. When he died the Associated Press declared, in the preamble to its resolutions of respect, that "he redeemed, as far as one man could do so, the journalism of his early days from the offensive practice of personal discussion, often ending in duels, and at times in death, and placed it upon the broad foundation of that tolerance for others which is inseparable from free discussion and true self-respect." In 1837 a hare-brained fellow named Holland, connected with a short-lived journal called the *Times*, challenged him to a duel because he had asserted that the *Times* was a mere tool in the hands of Senator Nathaniel P. Tallmadge. Bryant pocketed the challenge, and told its bearer that everything must take its turn; that Holland had already been termed a scoundrel by Leggett, and he could not take up the new quarrel till the old one was settled. Year by year the *Evening Post* refused to be drawn into offensive personalities. In 1832, when the *Courier* and *Enquirer* assailed it, Bryant wrote that "we shall never so far lose

sight of a proper sense of our own dignity, or of respect for our readers, as to make incidents in the private life of any political opponent a subject of discussion or reproach." Ten years later he was about to reply to an article in the *Plebeian,* but on looking at it a second time, "we were repelled from our purpose by the personalities which it contains." In 1863 a scurrilous attack on Bigelow and Thayer by the *World* drew the same curt statement.

How scrupulous Bryant was in his fifty years' editorship two incidents will illustrate. In the spring of 1859 a bill was pending at Albany to increase the compensation paid for legal advertisements, which was unfairly low. All the newspapers urged it, and the *Evening Post's* correspondent, one Wilder, proved a perfect Hercules of a lobbyist. "Yet," Bryant wrote Bigelow, "I was uncomfortable all the while at the idea of having a bill before the Legislature from which, if it passed, I would derive a personal advantage, and I was quite relieved when I saw that it was defeated." Some years earlier the London *Examiner* published a complimentary article regarding Bigelow's book upon Jamaica, of which he had about a hundred copies that he was eager to sell. He asked Bryant if he would be guilty of an impropriety in republishing the notice. "No," Bryant said hesitatingly, looking up from his desk, "no, not as the world goes." "But," persisted Bigelow, "how as the *Evening Post* goes?" "Why," rejoined the poet, "I never did such a thing. I have had a good many pleasant things said about me, but I never republished one of them in the *Evening Post.*" It need not be said that Bigelow abandoned his plan.

Bryant brought to his editorship a culture such as American journalism had not seen before, and has not since seen surpassed. A writer in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1855 made sport of the ignorance of American newspapers. He cited the *Herald's* statement, in a criticism of Racine's "Phedre," that "the language is written in what we call blank verse"; and its translation of a tag

from Virgil: "Adsum qui feci; he or me must perish." His sweeping criticism was unjust to a profession which already enlisted men like Richard Hildreth, Richard Grant White, and George Ripley, but Bryant, with his international reputation, was the most shining exception to it. His readers thought nothing of seeing an editorial on the United States Bank begin with an allusion to the episode of Nisus and Euryalus in Virgil, some story drawn from the legal lore he had mastered at the bar, or an apt quotation from the wide range of English poetry. His allusions and illustrations were always deft. "Like the misshapen dwarf in the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' " he said of the anti-Jacksonians in 1833, "they wave their lean arms on high and run to and fro crying, 'Lost! Lost! Lost!' " When Cass objected to any "temporary" measures regarding slavery in the territories, Bryant simply retold the story of Swift's servant, who did not clean his master's shoes because they would soon be dirty again; whereupon the Dean punished him by making him go without breakfast, because he would soon be hungry again.

The editor read assiduously. His wide acquaintance with the most intellectual men of New York kept him conversant with the latest ideas in every field. Above all, at a time when few journalists went abroad, his many trips to Europe supplied him with a constant fund of suggestions for civic and other improvements. These ranged from penny postage to street cleaning machines, from apartment houses to police uniforms, and from Central Park to the nickel five-cent piece, which, in imitation of a German coin, he was one of the first to advocate.

Bryant's insistence upon purity of diction was such that John Bigelow believed that in all his writings for the *Post* fewer blemishes could be found than in the first ten numbers of the *Spectator*. His sensitiveness as to literary form was fully developed when he joined the paper. On May 11, 1827, he published in it a paragraph on affectations of expression, condemning such barbarisms in current newspapers as "consolate." The most famous

evidence of his love of precision was his *index expurgatorius*. This was less extensive than it was sometimes represented to be, containing but eighty-six words or phrases; and as Bryant told George Cary Eggleston, it was for the guidance only of immature staff writers, and might sometimes be overstepped. It includes inflated words like inaugurate for begin, misemployed words like mutual for common, and along with some terms now used without hesitation, others universally condemned:

Above and over (for more than); Artiste (for artist); Aspirant; Authoress; Beat (for defeat); Bagging (for capturing); Balance (for remainder); Banquet (for dinner or supper); Bogus; Casket (for coffin); Claimed (for asserted); Commence (for begin); Collided; Compete; Cortege (for procession); Cotemporary (for contemporary); Couple (for two); Darkey (for negro); Day before yesterday (for the day before yesterday); Début; Decease; Democracy (applied to a political party); Develop (for expose); Devouring element (for fire); Donate; Employee; Enacted (for acted); Endorse (for approve); En Route; "Esq."; Graduate (for is graduated); Gents (for gentlemen); Hon. House (for House of Representatives); Humbug; Inaugurate (for begin); In our midst; Item (for particle, extract, or paragraph); Is being done, and all passives of this form; Jeopardise; Jubilant (for rejoicing); Juvenile (for boy); Lady (for wife); Last (for latest); Lengthy (for long); Leniency (for lenity); Loafer; Loan or loaned (for lend or lent); Located; Majority (relating to places or circumstances, for most); Mrs. President, Mrs. Governor, Mrs. General, and all similar titles; Mutual (for common); Official (for officer); Ovation; On yesterday; Over his signature; Pants (for pantaloons); Parties (for persons); Partially (for partly); Past two weeks (for last two weeks, and all similar expressions relating to a definite time); Poetess; Portion (for part); Posted (for informed); Progress (for advance); Quite (prefixed to good, large, etc.); Raid (for attack); Realized (for obtained); Reliable (for trustworthy); Rendition (for performance); Repudiate (for reject); Retire (as an active verb); Rev. (for the Rev.); Role (for part); Roughs; Rowdies; Secesh; Sensation (for noteworthy event); Standpoint (for point of view); Start (in the sense of setting out); State (for say); Talent (for talents or ability); Talented; Tapis; The deceased; War (for dispute).

Bryant was frequently called upon to decide nice questions of English, which he did with care; during the Civil War he took time, in answer to a query regarding the superlative, to dig up ancient instances like Milton's "virtuousest, discreetest, best." He has recorded his judgment that from newspaper writing a man's style gains in clearness and fluency, but is likely to become loose, diffuse, and stuffed with bad diction. He always insisted upon simplicity as the sole foundation of a fine style. Once the *Post* received a letter from a servant girl so clear and precise that Bryant had her sought out to learn how she could write so well. She explained that she used no expression of whose meaning she was not certain; that if at first she did so, she later struck it out and substituted a simpler word or phrase. Bryant held this procedure to be a model for reporters.

Parke Godwin, writing Charles A. Dana in 1845 that the best all-round editor in America was Greeley, added that Bryant "is by all odds the most varied and beautiful writer." He here touched one of Bryant's most distinctive merits as an editor. Bryant could not argue with more force than Greeley, or with the incisiveness and point of E. L. Godkin; but when moved by a great event, he wrote with an eloquence which no other editor ever attempted. The springs that fed his poetry fed this mastery of elevated prose. Any one who will study the fine rhetorical effects of his first great poem, "Thanatopsis," or of one of his last, "The Flood of Years," will understand what effects he sometimes wrought in the editorial columns of the *Evening Post*. Opening soberly though on a high plane, his more impassioned editorials would rise to a splendid climax. He did not use his grand style too frequently, but during the Civil War he employed it again and again. Thus he wrote July 6, 1863, upon the "three glorious days" at Vicksburg and Gettysburg:

> Many a gallant spirit lies silent forever on the bloody field; many peaceful homes are instantly made desolate; our hearts go forth in sorrow to the fallen and in condolence to the bereaved; but this is the eternal glory of those who have perished, as of

those who mourn their deaths, that they have given their lives in the noblest cause in which man was ever called to suffer. They have died for a country which is worthy of the blood of its citizens; for the integrity and honor of a government in which the dearest rights of millions are involved; and for the great principles of human freedom and human justice, in which the world and ages to come are deeply interested. Nowhere else could they have earned a more glorious renown, for nowhere else could they have contributed a better service to humanity.

Again, we find him hailing the doom of the Confederacy (Dec. 5, 1864):

In the tone of that pristine rebel whom the great poet makes to exclaim, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven," these proud and insolent spirits disdained to brook their fate, and flew to revolt. A new slave empire, a new semi-tropical nation, a grand aristocracy of white masters, was to be built around the Gulf of Mexico, our western Mediterranean, but alas for these dreams of ambition, the throne of Maximilian casts its shadow over one end of their prospective dominion, and the tread of Sherman's soldiers shakes the other into dust.

But the foundation of Bryant's power as an editor lay simply in his soundness of judgment, and his unwavering courage in maintaining it. The greatest peril of the profession, he wrote in 1851, "is the strong temptation which it sets before men, to betray the cause of truth to public opinion, and to fall in with what are supposed to be the views held by a contemporaneous majority, which are sometimes perfectly right and sometimes grossly wrong." That peril was greater in Bryant's day than now, for the comparative smallness and homogeneity of the reading public made it more dangerous to incur the general displeasure. He never yielded in the slightest degree to it; and the number of instances in which his view of public questions became the view taken by history is remarkable. The *Evening Post's* defense of trade unions, and of the abolitionists' right to free use of the mails and to free speech, are memorable illustrations. Just before the Civil War began Bryant ran over in the *Post* a list of its measures, at first opposed by the majority, but later ac-

cepted as sound. It was for many years the only powerful journal north of the Potomac which pleaded for a low tariff. It resisted the internal improvement system, advocated the sub-treasury system, and defended the right of petition. It successfully opposed the assumption of State debts by the national government. It was one of the earliest and most earnest advocates of cheaper postage rates, already partly realized. When the Fugitive Slave law had been proposed, it had denounced it as an infringement of the rights of the States, though most Northerners regarded it with indifference or approbation. As for the great slavery question in general, Bryant had already written just after Lincoln's election:

> We take this occasion to congratulate the old friends of the *Evening Post,* who have read it for the last score of years or thereabouts, on this new triumph of the principles which it maintains. The Wilmot Proviso is now consecrated as a part of the national public policy by this election; but earlier than the Wilmot Proviso was the opposition of our journal to the enlargement of slavery. It began with the first whisper of the scheme to annex Texas to the American Union, and it has been steadily maintained from that moment till now, when the right and justice of our cause is proclaimed in a general election by the mighty voice of a larger part of thirty millions of people.

Freedom, democracy—to these two principles every utterance of the *Evening Post* in its fifty years under Bryant was referred. Other journals might think of the day only and let the morrow take care of itself, but he was solicitous that each issue should fit into the exposition of a policy good for the year and the decade. "He looked upon the journal which he conducted," wrote his last managing editor, Robert Burch, "as a conscientious statesman looks upon the official trust which has been committed to him, or the work which he has undertaken—not with a view to do what is to be done to-day in the easiest or most brilliant way, but so to do it that it may tell upon what is to be done to-morrow, and all other days, until the worthiest object of journalism is achieved. This

is the most useful journalism; and first and last, it is the most effective and influential."

In his method of work, combining remarkable efficiency with a remarkable amount of disorder, Bryant was a true newspaper man. His desk, a large one used after him by Parke Godwin and Carl Schurz, was kept piled with litter—books, manuscripts, pamphlets, documents, and stranded memoranda; a little square being left in the middle where he could place writing materials and do his work. Once when Bryant went to Europe, says Bigelow, "I thought, I am going to clean house, and I did, and found all sorts of old newspapers, old contributions, letters, etc., etc." When the poet returned and saw his desk cleared, he demanded an explanation. Bigelow, giving it, perceived instantly that his little housecleaning had been an error. "I saw by his expression that I was trespassing. He did not make any remark, but his silence was a very severe rebuke. He did not like it at all that he could not have his old papers just as he had left them." Indeed, he was attached to a large number of homely but familiar objects. Among these was a pen-knife with which he used to trim both his quill pen and his finger nails. He owned an old blue cotton umbrella that he always insisted upon carrying. When he was departing for Mexico, his daughter replaced it with a handsome new one, but he missed it and refused the exchange.

It was Bryant's habit to write for the *Post* on the backs of circulars, letters received, and rejected manuscripts, for he held that it was shameful to waste the least scrap of useful material, since it represented men's time and labor. It is curious, in looking over his papers, to find what these scraps were; a letter to Lincoln, for example, was copied off from the back of a wine merchant's circular, offering Moët champagne at $12 the case. Yet he was really the soul of carefulness. His copy often went up to the printer a mass of interlineations and corrections; he never sent a letter away without first making a rough draft. Throughout his life he made it a rule to write everything for the *Post* in the office, never at home, and

even when an additional task was laid upon him, as when he wrote a sketch of the journal's history in 1851, he refused to do it elsewhere. This was a wise husbanding of his nervous energy; but his family recalls that he and Parke Godwin often discussed the paper's affairs at night.

No head of a newspaper was ever more considerate of his subordinates than Bryant, who had but one serious quarrel with an associate, and that was soon bridged over. Bigelow tells us that "he never rebuked me; he never criticized me." In looking over Bigelow's proofs, he would sometimes say, "Had not this word better be changed for that or the other? Does that phrase express all or more than you mean, or as clearly as you wish it to?" Even this gentle correction was rare. Another worker tells us that it was Bryant's habit, whenever he wished to speak to any one in the office, to go to the desk of the man rather than call him in. When John R. Thompson, the Southern poet, became literary editor just after the Civil War, Bryant knew how ardently he had sympathized with the Confederacy, and personally saw that he was given no book to review that would hurt his feelings. We have noted how he refused to say a word against the inefficient business manager of the *Post* early in the fifties, though recognizing his incompetence. He never wavered in his loyalty to Isaac Henderson when the latter was under fire in connection with Civil War contracts, and beyond doubt remained sincerely convinced that Henderson had done no wrong.

In the office, as outside of it, in fact, Bryant was a thorough democrat. During his travels in England, while staying at the home of a business man, he was once invited to dine with a country gentleman near by, and accepted in the belief that, as a matter of course, his host had also been invited. When he learned that this was not true, and that his host, being in trade, never thought of entering the gentleman's house, Bryant angrily canceled his acceptance. The incident made so disagreeable an impression upon him that he shortened his stay in the country. Similarly, when Dickens first visited New York,

a rich old Knickerbocker who had never theretofore taken the slightest notice of Bryant asked him to his house to meet the young novelist; and Bryant declined, telling a friend that he would never be a stool-pigeon to attract fine birds of passage. In all relations with others Bryant thought of the man, not of his rank, money, or reputation. The poverty-stricken, invalid Thompson became one of the intimates of his home soon after he joined the *Post*, and the editor showed a much higher regard for the rugged head of the composing-room, Dithmar, than for many a general or millionaire. When the *Post* moved to its new building in 1875, Bryant rarely occupied the handsome office fitted up for him there, with its fine view of the harbor, preferring a humble chair and desk in a corner of the composing room upstairs, where he was free from boresome callers.

"In his intercourse with his co-laborers and subordinates," wrote Parke Godwin, "the impression produced by Mr. Bryant, after a certain reticence, which diffused an atmosphere of coldness about him, was broken through, was that of his extreme simplicity and sincerity of character. He was as transparent as the day, as guileless as a child, and as clear in his integrity as the crystal that has no flaw nor crack." The coldness was but a mask, and Bryant's own feelings often threw it off. Entering the office one day, he told in a self-accusing way how, walking down-town, he had smashed a kite that a small boy dragged across his face, without paying the urchin for it; he reproached himself deeply. George Cary Eggleston, who worked beside him three or four years, says that "I found him not only warm in his human sympathies, but even passionate." Sometimes he would do something almost boyish. Once he was standing by a form around which the printers were gathered, hurriedly preparing it for the press. A word was spoken which suggested some stanzas from Cowley, and Bryant, locking his hands before him, repeated the verses with remarkable force and expression, while the printers paused and listened. Then he recovered himself with a start, a

look of embarrassment overspread his face, and—to change the subject—he turned to the casement around the elevator, tapped it, and said: "There is very little wood there to make trouble in case of fire."

He was wont to impress upon his associates the desirability of acting as courteously toward men and women of the outside world as possible. Bigelow says that he used to cite the example of Dr. Bartlett, editor of the *Albion,* whose rule was "never to write anything of any one which would make it unpleasant to meet him the following day at dinner." When Martin F. Tupper was about to visit the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876, Eggleston wrote a playful editorial about him, which the managing editor received with some apprehension, for he knew that Tupper had once entertained Bryant in England. It was decided to show Bryant the manuscript. The editor read it with evident amusement, but remarked: "I heartily wish you had printed this without saying a word to me about it, for then, when Mr. Tupper becomes my guest, as he will if he comes to America, I could have explained to him that the thing was done without my knowledge by one of the flippant young men of my staff. Now that you have brought the matter to my attention, I can make no excuse." The article was not published.

He disliked to rebuff unwelcome visitors. "It is a positive fact," writes the veteran dramatic editor of the *Evening Post,* Mr. J. Ranken Towse, "that he not infrequently preferred to escape them by passing through a back door opening into the composing room, and descending thence to the ground floor by means of the freight elevator. Sometimes he sent for me and asked me to rid him of the visitors. This I did easily and unscrupulously. Thus, in addition to my regular duties—I was then city editor—I became a sort of amateur Cerberus." When the widow of John Hackett, a young woman of striking beauty but no stage experience, resolved to play Lady Macbeth, she visited the *Post,* and although Mr. Towse tried to dissuade her, she induced Bryant to make a half-promise to deliver an introductory speech at her first

appearance. Bryant uneasily confessed this to Mr. Towse, who warned him plainly of the false position in which he would be left when her début proved a failure, as it was certain to do. When Mr. Towse offered to extricate him by dismissing Mrs. Hackett upon her next call, the poet eagerly assented.

It should be said that Bryant could be very blunt on occasion, and had no hesitancy in offending those he disliked. There were some men to whom he would never speak. Thurlow Weed, who for a time edited the *World*, was one. Once when they were together at an evening party a friend insisted that he must be allowed to introduce them; finally Bryant half arose from his chair, and then sank back, saying, "Not yet—not yet!" When he concluded that a man in public life had done wrong, he followed him to the end of his career with unbending aversion. In the warfare over the United States Bank, he conceived a fierce hatred of Nicholas Biddle; and when Biddle died, far from taking a *nil nisi bonum* attitude, he expressed deep regret that he had not died in jail. His judgment so angered Philip Hone that he wrote of Bryant in his famous Diary as a "black-hearted misanthrope," saying: "This is the first instance I have known of the vampire of party spirit seizing the lifeless body of its victim before its interment, and exhibiting its bloody claws to the view of mourning relatives." As well expect honey from the rattle-snake as poetry from such a man, he added.

It must also be remembered that Bryant was always severely dignified. If he never commanded a subordinate to do anything, but always requested it, he knew that his request was a command. He always addressed others with the prefix "Mr.," and no one, not even Bigelow or his son-in-law Parke Godwin, omitted the word in addressing him. When Dom Pedro of Brazil visited the *Evening Post*, Bryant did not greet the popular Emperor in the hall, but waited to receive him at his desk; and he called a junior to show Dom Pedro the press room.

A certain testiness grew upon the editor in his later

years, though it was never more than momentary. He was especially sensitive to any suggestion that he was losing his bodily vigor. Not only would he climb the stairs to his ninth-floor office, but he would now and then seize the frame of his door, and show his ability to "chin" it repeatedly. Once, when he fell in Broadway, he sharply rebuffed a gentleman who stepped up and asked, "Are you hurt, Mr. Bryant?"—and he was a little ashamed of it later. Mr. Towse once saw him consulting the city directory, his face showing plainly that the print was too fine for his eyes. Forgetting Bryant's pride in using no spectacles, he inquired, "Cannot I help you, Mr. Bryant?" The poet instantly rejoined, "No, sir!" with the angry tone of an insulted man, flung the book on a table, and walked swiftly from the room. Mr. Towse also tells us that if you asked Bryant a question, you were wise to accept his answer as final. "I was not long in finding that out. There had been an argument over the correct spelling of the word 'peddler.' As he was at his desk, I referred the matter to him. 'I shall have to write it,' he said, 'to make sure. It is often only by the look of it that I can decide whether a word is rightly spelled.' He wrote the word in several ways and finally selected the form in which I have given it. I thanked him and asked him whether either of the other spellings was permissible. He turned on me like a flash and said angrily, 'I thought you asked me how to spell it?' "

Such incidents were an evidence of Bryant's increasing age. Though he lived to be eighty-three, he gave his strength to the *Evening Post* till the very day he was stricken down. The only sustained series of editorials which he wrote after his final visit to Europe in 1867 was a series upon reciprocity in trade, but he still contributed many occasional leaders upon questions of the day. He was accustomed to come down in the morning, and whether he wrote an editorial or not, to read all the proofs with care and frequently to make heavy corrections. "He would pass through the editorial rooms with

a cheery good morning," says Eggleston; "he would sit down by one's desk and talk if there was aught to talk about; or, if asked a question while passing, would stand while answering it, and frequently would relate some anecdote suggested by the question or offer some apt quotation." Hawthorne, who had seen him abroad, spoke of him as "at once alert and infirm," and with "a weary look upon his face, as if he were tired of seeing things and doing things, though with certainly enough energy still to see and do, if need were." Yet the vigor and fire with which he treated topics of the day, if they seemed really pressing topics to him, was not a whit abated.

It is the testimony of more than one co-worker that his last day in the office, the day he delivered the address at the unveiling of the Mazzini statue, showed him worn and depressed. He went into Eggleston's room, and asked the latter's opinion upon two poems sent him by an acquaintance. Eggleston said they were poor stuff. "I supposed so," Bryant said sadly; "and now I suppose I shall have to write to her on the subject. People expect too much of me—altogether too much." He chatted also with Watson R. Sperry, the managing editor, who procured a book of reference from the *Evening Post* library for him. He was as tranquil and physically as strong as ever, but there was a tension in his voice. Finally, says Sperry, "he said to me that it was quite unfair to ask a man of his age to make a public address. There was a petulance and a pathos in his tone which I had never heard before." A few hours later, after speaking bareheaded in the sun, he collapsed on the steps of Gen. James Wilson's home.

Bryant's work for the *Post* must not be thought of as consisting wholly of editorial writing and management. He filled literally hundreds of its columns with his letters of travel, which covered each of his six trips to Europe, and his tours to the South and the Northwest, and which ultimately were collected into three volumes. The letters are not literature, but good journalism. Bigelow once wrote Bryant that "they are very much liked by the class

—of course, not the largest—who can appreciate them, and are of great value to the paper. I like them none the less because they are very different from the style of correspondence which ordinarily finds its way into newspapers from abroad." By this Bigelow meant that they did not depend upon important events, adventure, or gossip. Their interest lay in a careful observation of scenery and society which often caused them to be widely copied. In the early days the poet wrote reviews and reports of important lectures. His signed poems in the *Post* did not aggregate a dozen, but they were supplemented by unsigned light verse, of which a good specimen is the poem on "Bully" Brooks, Sumner's assailant, to be found in Godwin's biography (II, 92). Brooks had been challenged to a duel in Canada by Anson Burlingame:

> To Canada, Brooks was asked to go;
> To waste of powder a pound or so;
> He sighed as he answered, No, no, no,
> They might take my life on the way, you know.
> For I am afraid, afraid, afraid,
> Bully Brooks is afraid. . . .

Bryant reaped a generous material reward for his labors—the *Evening Post* made him by far the richest poet the country has had. He possessed a competence and more by 1860, for he had shared equally with Bigelow in profits that enabled the latter, after only twelve years with the paper, to retire worth more than $175,000. The *Post's* business history in the Civil War is summarized in the statement that its dividends reached 80 per cent. upon the capital invested, and that at the close of the struggle its value was commonly estimated at $1,000,000.

It made Bryant, with Parke Godwin and Isaac Henderson, wealthy while some other New York journals were scarcely paying expenses. The *Tribune* in October, 1861, said that the circulation of American dailies was larger than ever, but many had been forced into bankruptcy. "We doubt that a single daily in this city has paid its

expenses throughout the last four months, or that a dozen in the Union have done so." The receipts of the *Tribune* in 1864 were $747,501, and its expenses were $735,751, the nominal profit not sufficing to pay for the depreciation of the plant. The chief reason for the embarrassment of the morning papers was the enormous cost of paper, especially as the war neared its close. The *Tribune's* paper bill during 1864 was $426,000, whereas in 1861 it would not have been more than $200,000 for the same circulation. In the space of only four months, April to July, 1864, the combination of paper-makers in the Eastern States advanced the price from fifteen cents a pound to twenty-seven cents. The *Times* in 1863 imported paper from Belgium at seven and a half cents. The position of the *Post* was fortunate in that it used much less paper than the *Herald* or *Tribune*—it was still a four-page paper, while they had eight or twelve pages, though of course smaller—while at the beginning of the war it charged three cents a copy, and they only two. Later the prices of all the journals advanced; the *Evening Post* in 1862 going to four cents a copy and from $9 a year to $10, and in 1864 to five cents a copy and $12 a year.

Just how high the war-time circulation became we do not know. In April, 1861, it exceeded 20,000, and it steadily increased, the demand growing so heavy the first battle summer that whenever important news came it was necessary to issue many copies printed on one side of the sheet alone. To obviate this, in 1862 the journal installed "the largest and most efficient eight-cylinder newspaper press that has ever been constructed," at a cost of nearly $50,000. We know that in 1864 the total revenue from sales and subscriptions of the daily reached $250,000. Advertising, moreover, had become so extensive that frequently six pages instead of four had to be printed, and they had swollen to enormous size. All of the evening papers were still "blanket sheets," and one or two morning papers, the most prominent being the *Sun*, long remained so. At the close of the war the dimensions of

the unfolded *Evening Post* were 30½ by 52 inches—it was not a journal for use in such subways as the *Evening Post* was already advocating. No newspaper so large, the *Post* boasted, had ever attained so wide a circulation. Huge as it was, and devoting from 20 to 25 of its 40 columns to advertising, it had constantly to exclude advertisements. The advertising receipts of the *Herald* in 1865 reached $662,192; of the *Tribune,* $301,841; of the *Times,* $284,412; and of the *Evening Post,* which stood high above the *World* or *Sun,* and easily led the evening papers, $222,715.

Bryant, who in the late thirties would probably have sold his interest in the *Post* for a few thousands clear, thus by 1866 had grown rich far beyond any wish or expectation on his part. He lived very simply; a man who would rather walk than drive, who preferred oatmeal to any procurable dainty, and whose most lavish entertainment was to have the Rev. Dr. Henry Bellows or some other well-loved friend spend a week-end at Roslyn, could not do otherwise. The chief outward signs of his wealth were that he acquired, besides his little estate at Roslyn, a town house, and the ancestral homestead at Cummington, Mass.; while he unostentatiously gave large sums in charity. President Mark Hopkins of Williams College, acknowledging a check from Bryant, wrote that it was a queer world in which poets were able to be lavish philanthropists. It was because of his large gifts that he was able to contradict with some asperity a stranger who wrote him criticizing his tariff views, and denouncing him as a plutocrat because he was said to be worth more than $500,000. Bryant replied, in a hitherto unpublished note:

I am as much for free trade as yourself. The *Evening Post* has been all along known as an advocate for absolute free trade between nations, and for the support of government by direct taxation. But as the state of public opinion leaves no hope of this, the *Evening Post* for the present coöperates with those who seek a reduction of the tariff to a simple revenue standard with no view leading to protection. That is as much as we can now get and

the *Evening Post* is for taking it. As we cannot go by a single jump from the bottom of the stairs to the top, we take the first step.

Your estimate of the property I possess is greatly exaggerated. You intimate that I ought to be a second Zaccheus. How do you know I am not? You have no knowledge of how much of my income, such as it is, goes to public objects, and to the poor. Nor is it my business to inform you. I have for the greater part of my life been in narrow circumstances, yet never repined on that account, and although I have been prospering of late, it is not my fault, for I never made haste to be rich. You see therefore that you have administered reproof without knowing, or probably caring, whether there was any occasion for it or not. (Dec. 14, 1870.)

Bryant began his journalistic career in poverty and discouragement, his literary friends jeering at him for exchanging the dignified profession of the law for the jangling, vulgar newspaper calling. He made it pay richly in money, and above all in honor and influence. No man of his time did more, and only three, Greeley, Raymond, and the elder Bowles, did so much, to elevate the press in public esteem. "If our newspapers have risen above the level on which they stood when Dickens and Trollope held them up to the scorn of Europe," said the Brooklyn *Times* when he died, "it is because they have been wise enough to profit by the lesson set by William Cullen Bryant." He had often crossed pens with the *Journal of Commerce* and the *World*. The former spoke of him as "an editor whose example has been uniformly ennobling," and said that "journalism will never improve so much that it may not safely pattern by Bryant." "His long and honorable career," said the latter, "had put into his hands that mysterious influence called weight of character." Not a few journals, like the Philadelphia *Ledger*, and some individuals, like John D. Van Buren, ranked the editor above the poet.

When George W. Curtis delivered his commemorative address in New York before an audience which included President Hayes and members of his Cabinet, he paid his warmest tribute to Bryant as the journalist. "The fact

is no such man ever sat before or since in the editorial chair," a critic has just written in the Cambridge History of American Literature; "in no other has there been such culture, scholarship, wisdom, dignity, moral idealism. Was it all in Greeley? In Dana? What those fifty years may have meant as an influence on the American press . . . the layman may only guess."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

APARTMENT HOUSES RISE AND TWEED FALLS

NOT long before the war New York's manners were provincial, and not long afterwards the city felt itself one of the world's great centers. In twenty years, 1850-70, the population grew from a half million to a million. Such large groups were enriched by war contracts, the rise of real estate, and the nation-wide business expansion that the increase in luxury struck every observer. A Four Hundred was taking shape, rich shops were arising, the opera was growing more and more gilded; in 1868, said the *Evening Post,* the receipts of the score of theaters reached $3,165,000. The *Post* that year listed ten of the richest men in order—Wm. B. Astor, believed to be worth $75,000,000; A. T. Stewart, Wm. C. Rhinelander, Peter and Robert Goelet, James Lenox, Peter Lorillard, John D. Wolfe, M. M. Hendricks, Rufus M. Lord, and C. V. S. Roosevelt. Their wealth, it told them, had become so great that if they tried they could accomplish enormous benefits for New York—they could sweep away the debasing tenement house system, or shatter the Tammany Ring; and the people believed that public services were the best if not the only justification for such wealth.

The growth in population emphasized the desirability of many diverse improvements. At the beginning of 1867 the *Evening Post* was demanding a great art gallery, such as we now have in the Metropolitan Museum, and pointing to European collections as models, while later the same year it urged a zoological garden like London's, there being as yet none in all America. It and the *Tribune* together in 1871 asked for a single large public library. There were several small ones—the Astor, the Mercantile, the Society Library, and the unfinished Lenox Library—but none was "public" in the sense that it circu-

lated books free, while the city would obviously benefit from the union of some of the larger collections. Having been the first to propose Central Park, Bryant applauded the creation of Prospect Park in Brooklyn, for which ground was broken in 1866. Theodore Thomas, who had begun to organize his orchestra early in the war, and immediately afterwards had opened his "summer night" concerts, issued a call through the newspaper for a supporting fund of $20,000. In several editorials in the spring of 1868, the first entitled "Can a City Be Planned?", the *Evening Post* suggested that a board of engineers be named to lay out a city plan, determining which areas should be used for retail trade, manufactures, and residence. It was an Age of Innocence in many ways —people wondered at the first concrete sidewalk, laid from Park Row to Murray Street in 1868; they were just learning the use of safe deposit vaults, and elevators were curiosities; but it was an age of progress.

The problem which most pressed upon New York after Appomattox, as after the World War, was housing. Building had stopped during the conflict, and its resumption was slow, but Manhattan had kept on growing at the rate of 30,000 people a year. In the winter of 1866-7 the *Evening Post* pronounced New York the most costly place of residence on earth. "Houses are so scarce that landlords see tenants running around, like pigs in the land of Cockaigne, with knives and forks in their backs, begging to be eaten; it is a favor to get a decent house at a preposterous rent—at almost any sum, in fact; and we know of families living comfortably in Europe from the rent of a house on one of the favorite avenues." That spring a great open-air mass meeting was held in protest, and petitions were sent the Legislature for a law basing rents upon the assessed valuation. Those of moderate means suffered more than the rich or the poor tenement dwellers. "Bank clerks, bookkeepers, and salesmen are compelled to go to New Jersey, Staten Island, Long Island, or Westchester to secure attractive and comfortable homes," said the *Post*. "New York is practically

losing the best part of its population." The practice of sub-letting parts of single houses waxed common.

From this demand for housing there arose an unprecedented real estate boom. Thousands of homes were placed on the market at high prices, and land auctions took place daily. The *Evening Post* reported that lots in Manhattan and Brooklyn were eagerly bought at unheard-of rates. The neighborhoods of Central and Prospect Parks had become popular for residences, while merchants were purchasing sites for stores on Union Square and Fifth Avenue. Lots that fronted upon what is now Central Park West had sold in 1850 for a few hundred dollars apiece, and in 1860 for from $2,000 to $3,000, but in 1867 they were bringing from $8,000 to $15,000. High up on the East Side, at 91st Street, lots now sold at $3,000. When Bay Ridge Terrace was created in 1868 the journal commented upon the rapid growth of that fine part of Brooklyn, which it had already noted to be spreading eastward rapidly. Brownsville and East New York before the war had been quiet farming communities, but now the former had a hundred houses, and the latter had grown with a rush to 5,000 souls.

The northward march of business, causing the demolition of hundreds of old residences, increased the need for new residential construction. When Ex-Mayor Opdyke's house on Fifth Avenue near Sixteenth Street was sold to James A. Hearn & Son in 1867 for $105,000, and a milliner established herself on the Avenue at Twenty-second Street, the *Evening Post* devoted an editorial to the transformation. It predicted that all Fifth Avenue to Twenty-third Street would soon be engrossed by business, the new Fifth Avenue Hotel having given the movement impetus. Higher up, residential property had reached amazing prices. A brownstone house at Thirtieth Street had just been purchased for $114,000, while P. T. Barnum had bought one at the corner of Thirty-ninth for $80,000. A fine light brownstone mansion on the corner of Fortieth, building for W. H. Vanderbilt, would cost at least $80,000, the stable and lot included. At Forty-third

Street a wealthy Jewish congregation was building a synagogue at an outlay of fully $700,000, while ten blocks farther up, where St. Thomas's was about to be erected, $100,000 had been offered and refused for a plot 100 by 125 feet. Seven houses with brownstone fronts had just been finished on the west side of the Avenue, between Forty-third and Forty-fourth, and were so finely furnished that the front doors had cost $700 each, and the staircases $4,000.

The most serious aspect of the housing shortage was that as yet respectable New Yorkers knew but two modes of residence: one must either take a full single house, or consent to a dismal boarding house. The apartment building was known only to travelers in Europe, and was mistrusted as not being adapted to American individualism.

The possibility of utilizing the multiple-unit type of housing, however, was unceasingly expounded by the *Evening Post* from the time peace returned, for the editors had lived in the "Continental flat" abroad. An early editorial (Feb. 6, 1866) was called "How to Gain Room."

> It has been suggested frequently that tenement houses scientifically built would be profitable in New York, and a great boon to the working people. But they would be no less an advantage to the wealthier classes, and we wonder that the attempt has not been made first in the best part of town, and with houses calculated to accommodate families of the wealthier citizens, at a somewhat more moderate rent than is attainable now.
>
> Many a family which now occupies a whole house uptown would be content to rent a floor, suitably fitted up after the manner of the houses of Paris and other European cities. Such an arrangement would spare the women of the family the endless and often painful toil of going up and downstairs, from the kitchen to the top of a three-storied house, three or four times a day. It would be far more convenient, and the rents might well make a considerable saving.

The inertia of New Yorkers was to blame, the *Post* said a little later. "Such a thing as hiring a suite of rooms

and having meals sent in from a restaurant at a fixed and moderate charge is, we believe, almost if not quite unknown here. As for the 'flats' in which thousands of families conveniently and comfortably keep house in France and Germany, they require an arrangement of house architecture not known to our builders." In the summer of 1867, when the congestion was at its worst, the editors gave publicity to the design of an architect for an apartment house for the "middling classes." Upon two ordinary city lots, 20 by 100 feet, he proposed erecting a four-story building, containing eight distinct suites of rooms, all as completely isolated from each other as though they were detached houses. There was to be a central stairs, each landing giving entrance to two homes; but every visitor would have to ring below for admission precisely as at the front door of any other houses. Each suite was to contain a parlor, dining room, four bedrooms, bath, and kitchen. For some time the newspaper carried on a veritable crusade.

When the first apartment house was ready, in 1870, one designed by Richard M. Hunt and erected at 142 East Eighteenth Street, the *Evening Post* rejoiced in it as the harbinger of a new housing era. It was said to be better than most of those in Paris, though the *Post* thought it lacking in light and ventilation. Each of the sixteen suites had six rooms and a bath, and rents ranged from $1,500 on the lower floors to $1,080 on the upper—G. P. Putnam, the publisher, and others of means lived in it. There was no elevator, but a dumbwaiter enabled the tenants to bring coal up from the basement. The close of 1870 saw the new movement in full swing, with eight houses built or building, and a strong demand for more.

An apartment house on Forty-eighth Street boasted a porter, who lighted the halls, removed garbage, and sent up fuel; the rents were only $40 to $75 a month. A block of flats overlooking Central Park from the east at Sixty-eighth Street gave each tenant eight rooms and a bath, elevator service, black walnut floors, and his own

kitchen range and hot water heater for $75 to $150. The most pretentious house, however, was building at Fifth Avenue and Madison Square. It was costing a round million, and was to be 125 feet high. "Each suite will have ten rooms, four closets, and eight washbowls," announced the *Evening Post,* and rents were to run from $2,000 to $3,000 a year. The journal advised builders to install elevators, and charge as much for the upper as for lower floors.

For several years a marked prejudice against flats persisted. Most New Yorkers believed that in this land of democratic sociability it would be impossible to isolate the apartments and obtain privacy, and that they would soon sink to the level of tenements. The *Post* did its share in ridiculing these fears, and in pointing out the ugliness of the monotonous blocks of brownstone houses. It denied the common remark, "No house is big enough for two families." But as it later said, one of the cardinal reasons for the rapid dissipation of the prejudice and popular success of the apartment houses was the building, in the first instance, of costly structures as pioneers in the movement.

By 1874 it thought that the new houses "may now be considered almost perfect." The Haight Building, at Fifteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, offered thirty flats at $2,000 to $3,000 a year each, with an elevator, an internal telegraph, and a restaurant. Among the notables living here were Henry M. Field, the traveler; Col. W. C. Church, editor of the *Galaxy;* Prof. Youmans, founder of the *Popular Science Monthly,* and the Spanish Consul. But the last word in luxury was an apartment building in Fifty-sixth Street, where "the whole house is warmed by steam, and hot water is supplied to all the tenants at the expense of the owner." The paper's prediction that ten-story houses with elevators would be more popular than smaller buildings had been completely justified.

Even before the rise of the apartment house came the first sharp attacks upon tenement evils. New York City had no lack of this particular kind of multiple-family

dwelling, for in 1864 they numbered 15,511, and housed 486,000 persons. They were far from being what we mean by tenements to-day: not until about 1879 was the first tenement house of the now familiar type, five, six, or more stories high, erected. The earlier buildings were comparatively low barracks, many of them converted mansions, shops, and stables, and others "rear houses" in the back yards of old mansions; all without airshafts, and with no complete provision for separating families. The *Evening Post* fitly called them "The Modern Upas," for they breathed upon the city the poisons of cholera, typhus, smallpox, and crime. As early as April, 1860, six years before the first legislative inquiry into the housing of the poor, the editors had called shocked attention to police records showing that some 18,000 New Yorkers were veritable troglodytes, dwellers in cellars. It spoke out at the same time against the horrible congestion of the slums. One "rear house" on Mulberry Street had 222 persons huddled together; in Cow Bay, one of the colored quarters, one house held 230 persons; while the notorious Old Brewery at Five Points had sheltered 215 people before it burned. In the Sixth Ward, surrounding the Five Points, sixty-three small structures housed 4,721 persons.

An indignant editorial attack upon the deplorable tenement-house conditions appeared in the *Evening Post* six months after Lee's surrender, inspired by a report of the Citizens' Association. Half the people of New York lived in tenements, and on the East Side they were packed in at the rate of 220,000 to the square mile. The *Post* estimated that more than 25,000 dwelt in unfit cellars, shanties, or stable-lofts. Of the 15,000 tenements, almost 4,000 had no connection with the sewers. One in three was a perpetual "fever nest," in which typhus was endemic, while not one in fifteen was what a tenement house ought to be. A single "fever nest" on East Seventeenth Street, almost within a stone's throw of the Mayor's home, had sent thirty-five typhus patients during 1864 to the municipal fever hospital, while nearly

a hundred more had been treated in the building. The public, repeated the *Post* early in 1867, was astonished to awake from the war to the vast extent of the tenement system, the immense numbers inhabiting such places, and the horrid evils of filthiness, immorality, and sickness engendered by them. "No man has a right to establish a nest of fever and vice in the city," it said, arguing for new laws and a government agency to regulate the construction and use of tenements.

Simultaneously, the newspaper kept up its old complaints, dating from Coleman's day, of the lack of due sanitary regulations and activity. Slaughter-houses continued to abound, there being twenty-three in the northern half of the Twentieth Ward alone, some of them draining blood and other refuse for long distances through open sewers. In Forty-sixth Street on the East Side, a single neighborhood was blessed with one slaughter-house, six tripe, three sausage, and two bone-boiling establishments, and in the summer was almost uninhabitable (Sept. 2, 1865). A little later the *Post* took notice of the nastiness of the harbor. Many sewers emptied into the slips and under the piers, and there being no movement of the water, the sewage decayed until it had to be dredged out. These facts help explain an editorial of 1866 defining the typhus area block by block. It extended in irregular strips from the Battery up the West Side to Cortlandt Street, and up the East Side to Thirty-sixth. Smallpox was endemic throughout a rectangle bounded by Broadway, the Bowery, Chambers, and Bleecker, and in so many additional spots in the lower part of the city that a man could hardly get to his work downtown without crossing infected areas.

In the spring of 1867 the Legislature hesitatingly passed the first act to regulate the erection and management of tenements. Though it was, as the *Evening Post* said, "much less stringent and particular" than the English laws on which it was modeled, it placed important powers in the city Board of Health organized shortly before, for which the *Post* had also struggled. All ten-

ants of cellars were required to vacate them unless they could obtain special permits, and within two years the *Post* was rejoicing over a drastic order for the cutting of 46,000 windows in interior rooms. Of course this legislation was only a beginning. In 1878-79 we find the *Evening Post* vigorously agitating for its extension, and publishing articles upon "The Homes of the Poor" which give a horrifying picture of Mulberry Court and other slum sections. Half of the city's 125,000 children lived in tenements, and nine-tenths of the deaths among children occurred there. In May, 1878, the "Evening Post Fresh-Air Fund" was founded for the purpose of sending slum children to country homes for summer rest and recreation. The business office collected and disbursed the money raised by almost daily appeals in the newspaper, and the Rev. Willard Parsons took charge of the work of finding farmers to take the children, and of transporting them. Some years later the *Tribune* took over the Fresh-Air Fund, and still maintains it. In 1879, after a mass-meeting upon the tenement problem at Cooper Union, addressed among others by Parke Godwin, then editor of the *Evening Post,* new regulatory legislation was passed at Albany.

Every one saw that evils in housing could not be corrected without expanding the city's area, and in the decade after the Civil War the city press paid little more attention to them than to the twin perplexity of transportation. The first talk of a subway had been heard in the early fifties, and was thin talk indeed, although the London underground railway dates from 1853. The *Evening Post* used to boast that it had been the first journal to propose a steam subway, Bryant having brought the idea home from England. But the real solution of the transit problem, for a period which had no electric traction, lay in the elevated railways which Col. Robert L. Stevens had suggested as long before as 1831. The need grew more and more urgent. When the war ended, transportation was furnished by the horse railways and by eight omnibus companies. The horse-cars were slowly driving

the buses out of business, the great Consolidated Company, which operated a half-dozen lines, having gone bankrupt in 1864; but there remained 250 of the vehicles, or enough to impede other traffic seriously. The capital invested in them was $1,600,000, for each had six $200 horses, while wages and stabling costs had risen fast.

To find room for the growing population, and to ease the streets of their intolerable burden—these were the two chief arguments for rapid transit. As the *Evening Post* said in the closing days of 1864, the most desirable parts of the island, the sections abreast of and above Central Park, were largely given up to pigs, ducks, shanty-squatters, and filth. A railroad under Broadway, it thought, would soon change all that. "When a merchant can go to Central Park in fifteen minutes he will not hesitate to live in Seventieth or Eightieth Street; and a resident of One Hundredth Street could reach the business section of the city as quickly by the underground railway as those who live in Twentieth Street do now." Better live in Yonkers than Harlem, it remarked later. As for the streets, it declared in 1866: "Broadway is simply intolerable to the man who is in a hurry; he must creep along with the crowd, no matter how cold it is; he crosses the street at the risk of his life; and when he journeys up and down in an omnibus, he wonders at the skill with which a wheeled vehicle is made so perfectly uncomfortable."

A multitude of suggestions for better transit had been brought forward by this time. Some men proposed one or several subways; the *Evening Post* modestly thought that five were needed, several beginning at the Battery and the rest at Canal Street, and all running to the Harlem. Others favored elevated roads mounted on single pillars in the streets, and still others called for such roads running over the housetops. Sunken railways in the middle of certain streets were proposed, and one powerful intellect devised a scheme for two railways, one on each side of Broadway, running "through the cellars"! To lessen the traffic congestion in Broadway, a college

professor suggested that the city buy the ground floor of all buildings for a space ten or twelve feet deep on each side, and form an arcade there for foot passengers, yielding the entire street to vehicles. Another professor thought that horses should be banished altogether, and the freight and passenger traffic in Broadway restricted to steam trains. To all the plans objections were made, and were frequently as wonderful in their way. Thus Engineer Craven of the Croton Board demonstrated at length in February, 1866, that no subway could ever be built, because it would interfere with the water supply; and even the *Post* called his argument "a knockdown blow."

In the spring of 1867 the *Evening Post* was regarding hopefully two schemes before the Legislature, one for a "three-tier railroad" (subway, surface, and elevated), and one for a metropolitan underground line. In 1868 the Legislature actually authorized a steam subway from City Hall to Forty-second Street, the incorporators of which included such substantial men as William B. Ogden, William E. Dodge, and Henry W. Slocum, but the enterprise did nothing more than demonstrate the immediate impracticability of the plan. Three years later the *Post* had swung to the sensible view that an elevated would be better than a subway, for it had been shown that the latter would cost $30,000,000, and no one was ready to invest. Elevated construction had then already begun, and when Bryant died in 1878 there were four lines.

Subordinate to the two main subjects of housing and transit, a great variety of comments upon city affairs can be found in the post-bellum columns of the newspaper. One of the most frequent topics of editorial complaint in the years 1866-68 was the dirty and broken condition of the streets, which New York was paying a former Tammany Judge, James R. Whiting, $500,000 a year to neglect. Just before the war the *Post* had contended energetically for the introduction of sweeping machines, and now it objected to the contract system. Some city officer, it held, should be responsible. It anticipated Col.

George F. Waring when it suggested that the city might well "engage an army officer used to drilling and handling a large number of men and accustomed to discipline, and put the streets in his charge, with a simple injunction to keep them clean, constantly, under all circumstances." Early in the seventies we find the paper defending Henry Bergh, founder of the S. P. C. A., against journals which attacked his efforts to protect dumb animals as fanatical; applauding (February, 1873) the first stirrings of the movement to unite New York and Brooklyn under one government; and raising an agonized outcry over the postoffice which Mullet, the supervising architect of the Treasury, was building at City Hall Park.

That greater city toward which public-spirited men then looked was sketched in an editorial of 1867 entitled "New York in 19—." The *Evening Post* hoped that before the twentieth century was far advanced Central Park would be really central, and the upper part of the island as populous as the lower. Brooklyn would have been united governmentally with New York, and physically by several bridges thrown across the East River. There should be a great railway station in the heart of the city, near the chief hotels, and freight stations only on its borders. Retail trade would be scattered, and "the Stewarts of that day will be found on broad, clean cross streets near the Central Park"; while spacious markets would have supplanted "the filthy sheds" in which provisions were then sold. "The streets of New York will be no longer rough and dirty; they will be covered with a smooth pavement like that . . . now laid on a part of Nassau Street or covered with asphaltum, like some of the pavements of Paris." Whoever wrote the editorial might to-day call this much of the prophecy fairly realized. But he went on to picture an adequate system of tenements, comfortable, sanitary, and cheap, managed by public-spirited corporations; a rapid transit system sufficient for all needs; and a shore line equipped with fine piers and basins, modern warehouses, and the best

loading and unloading apparatus—all of which still belongs to a Utopian vision.

II

The most important municipal questions, however, arose from Tammany politics; and the city which was so sluggish and blundering in sheltering itself and transporting itself was more so in governing itself. The history of the most memorable years of New York's administration was condensed by the *Evening Post* in the seventies into a short municipal epic:

> In eighteen hundred and seventy
> The Charter was purchased by W. M. T.
> By eighteen hundred and seventy-one
> The Tweed Ring's stealing had all been done.
> By eighteen hundred and seventy-two
> The amount of the stealing the people knew.
> By eighteen hundred and seventy-three
> Most of the thieves had decided to flee.
> In eighteen hundred and seventy-four
> Tweed was allowed his freedom no more.

This epic starts, as it should, in *medias res*. An enormous amount of stealing had been done before 1870, and the disclosures of the summer of 1871 were by no means so unexpected as we are likely to think. When A. Oakey Hall was elected Mayor in 1868 on the Tammany ticket, intelligent citizens knew that there existed a Ring of dual character—a corrupt combination of leading Democratic politicians in New York, and a corrupt alliance between them and Republicans at Albany. They knew that the city Ring regularly levied tribute on accounts for supplies, construction, and repairs; and that its head was William M. Tweed, with Peter B. Sweeney, the Chamberlain, and Richard B. Connolly, the Controller, completing its guiding triumvirate. No paper had insisted so constantly upon these facts as the *Post*. It may claim to have been the leader in the fight against the Ring until the close of 1870, when, with the resignation of Charles

Nordhoff as managing editor, it relaxed its efforts, and the *Times* stepped to the front.

Tweed was a familiar figure to all interested in city affairs—an enormous, bulky personage, his apparent ponderosity belied by his firm, swift step and his piercing eyes, grim lips, and sharp nose. He was a man of inexhaustible energy, a fighter as fresh at midnight as at noon. From his little private office on Duane Street, where a faded sign proclaimed him an attorney-at-law, he would sally out on an instant's notice to City Hall, to Albany, or to some ward headquarters where a revolt was brewing, and assert his authority with despotic effectiveness. By his untiring activity, his imposing physique, and his combination of cruelty, shrewdness, and audacity, he had risen in fifteen years from his original calling of chair-maker to be a multi-millionaire and dictator of the city. The office on which he chiefly founded this success was his seat on the County Board of Supervisors, which he held continuously after 1857.

His lieutenant, Sweeney, or "the Squire," was later called by an Aldermanic Committee "the most despicable and dangerous, because the best educated and most cunning of the entire gang." Nast's cartoons have made us familiar with his villainous look—his low forehead, heavy brows, thick lips, and bushy hair. Yet he was quiet, retiring, cold, averse to mingling with the crowd or with other politicians, and in a measure cultured; he was a ready writer, his mental operations were keen and quick, and he was held in awe by the Tammany satellites, whom he would pass in the street without recognizing by even a nod. Connolly was the most respectable of the three in appearance, looking, with his trim black broadcloth, close-shaven face, and high, narrow forehead, the very part of a business or municipal treasurer. He was really an ignorant Irish-born bookkeeper, who brought to the Ring plenty of low cunning, the product of a mixture of cowardice and greed, and the quadruple-entry system of bookkeeping which it found so useful.

As early as the municipal election of 1863, when the

Evening Post supported Orison Blunt as a reform candidate against the nauseous F. I. A. Boole, the editors were denouncing "that army of scamps which has so long fattened upon the city treasury." The paper clearly understood how the Ring had originated. For ten years preceding the war, the Republicans had exercised general control of the State government, and the Democrats of the city. The Legislature step by step had reduced the powers of the municipality by entrusting them to State boards and commissions. As a climax to this process, in 1857, it established the powerful New York County Board of Supervisors, a State body composed of six Republicans and six Democrats. But the grafters of the two parties conspired to defeat these ill-planned efforts at reform, and by 1860 discerning men saw that the net result of the transfer of authority had been simply to create two centers of corruption instead of one, and to implicate both parties. Tweed and his fellow-Democrats on the Board of Supervisors quickly gained control by bribing one of the Republicans, and at Albany—

> a bargain [said the *Evening Post* of Aug. 12, 1871] was made between the most prominent factions in the two parties, the Seward-Weed Republicans and the Tammany Democrats, by which the offices were divided between them, and all direct or personal responsibility for official conduct was destroyed. Tammany managed the city vote, in accordance with this bargain; Mr. A. Oakey Hall, the counsel of the combination, drew up the laws which were needed to carry it out; Mr. Thurlow Weed and his lobby friends passed them through the Legislature, and the New York *Times* gave them all the respectability they could get from its hearty support, in the name of the Republican party.

Immediately after the war the *Evening Post* asked for a new Charter as the best cure for the evil. The city should again be allowed to rule itself, the editors believed, and this self-government should be exercised through one party, which could be made to answer directly for all acts of the municipal authorities. "Make the Democratic party clearly responsible in this city for all its misgovernment, corruption, and waste, and the

people would drive it from power in less than three years." The existing Charter had four great defects, said the *Post* in January, 1867: the lack of home rule, the division of the city legislature into two bodies, which impeded business, the failure to withdraw all executive functions from these bodies, and the fact that the Mayor had little real authority or responsibility. "All the successive changes since 1830 have been made upon the same principle of limiting or withdrawing powers that are abused, instead of enforcing an effective responsibility for the abuse. This policy . . . has produced the evils which it feared. Never was the administration so ineffective, never was there so much corruption, and never were the people so little interested in choosing their officers with any hope that one class or set will do better than another."

The charges made by the paper were all general—no guilty men or departments were specified. But it had a pretty clear conception of the extent of the stealing. In April, 1867, it alleged that the city was being robbed of hundreds of thousands in "the monstrous court house swindle"; robbed by the politicians in collusion with the twenty horse railways of the city, of which only three paid the full license tax imposed by law; robbed in the cleaning and repair of the streets; and robbed in the renting and sale of the city's real estate. In April, 1868, it estimated that the Ring during the previous year had made a half million upon the contracts for the building, repair, and furnishing of the city armories. The failure to name the criminals arose from the inability of even so able a managing editor as Nordhoff to trace the peculations. Since the district attorney, sheriff, courts, aldermen, and even the Legislature were under the Ring's influence, the secrecy of its transactions seemed impenetrable. Give the city a new government, was the view of the *Post*, and reform, though not necessarily punishment of the criminals, would follow. "Is New York a colony?" was the title of an editorial in June, 1867. Moreover, the paper was the less concerned to be specific in

that it believed mere general denunciation of the Ring was having a much greater effect than was the case. "Thieves Growing Desperate," ran another editorial caption of April, 1868:

> The vampires of the city treasury are well aware of the growing determination of the people to make away with them. They must choose between two alternatives. They must either aim at prolonging their privilege of plunder by moderating and disguising their use of it, or they must steal so enormously for the short time remaining as to compensate them for soon losing their chance.

If Tweed saw this utterance, he must have dropped a contemptuous chuckle over it. He was quite resolved to steal "enormously," but the "short time" which the *Post* gave him proved a good three years. Far from being desperate, the Ring was just getting its hand in. The graft on the armories, which the *Post* accurately estimated at already a half million, ultimately reached three millions, and the graft on the courthouse, which the paper had put at hundreds of thousands, rose steadily until it totaled $9,000,000. Tweed was attaining more and more power as the year 1869 opened. He had just been elected to the State Senate, and could now personally superintend every item of the Ring's machinations at Albany, while his friend A. Oakey Hall was just taking his seat as Mayor.

The *Evening Post* was quite likely right in its contention that a new and truly good Charter would even at this date have awakened a new interest in city affairs, and a spasm of reform; but a good Charter it was impossible to get. With his usual shrewdness, Tweed at once prepared to use the movement for a better form of city government to make his position secure.

When the legislative session of January, 1870, began —the first Legislature in twenty-four years to be controlled by the Democrats—it was generally agreed that the city would be given another Charter. The Tweed Ring was preparing one; the Young Democrats, an unsavory group who opposed Tweed on strictly selfish grounds,

were preparing one; and the reform element represented by the Union League Club, the *Evening Post*, the *Tribune*, and the *World*, wanted one. "The true democratic doctrine of city government," insisted the *Post*, "is that power ought to be simple, responsibility undivided and direct." The proposed Charter of the anti-Ring Democrats, the so-called "huckleberry Charter" of the "hay-loft-and-cheesepress" up-Staters, was defeated. Then, at the beginning of February, Tweed and Sweeney suddenly sprang their own instrument, and made it clear that they would push it rapidly through. It was patently vicious. As early as Feb. 3, the *Evening Post* attached it sharply. It pointed out that it embodied none of that simplification of powers and responsibility which the *Post* had long advocated; that too many city departments would be governed by boards, not single heads; that the Common Council retained its executive functions; and that the four-year term which it gave the Mayor and his lieutenants was, under the circumstances, dangerous.

But four days later a far more powerful attack was published. The *Evening Post* would in any event have kept up its campaign with growing vigor, but it had found an unexpected helper and adviser in Samuel J. Tilden. Bryant later wrote:

> It was in February of the year 1870 that Samuel J. Tilden came and desired an interview with the senior editor. . . . He seemed moved from his usual calm and quiet demeanour. His errand, he said, related to the Charter which Tweed and his creatures were trying to get enacted into law. If that should happen, it would give the city, with all the powers of its government, into the hands of men who felt no restraint of conscience and who would plunder it without stint. The city would be ruined, he said, if this Charter, conceived with a special design to make speculation easy, passed, and it was altogether important that the *Evening Post* should resist its passage with all the power of argument which it possessed, and prevent it if possible. He then, with his usual perspicacity, pointed out the contrivances for misusing the public funds which were embodied in the bill. . . . The *Evening Post* did not require Mr. Tilden's exhortations to oppose

the bill, but we proceeded, by the help of the additional light given us, to hold up the Charter to the severest censure.

The *Post* in a series of editorials absolutely riddled the Tweed Charter. It aimed its main fire, however, at the heart of the document—its creation of a Board of Special Audit with financial powers so huge that millions could be stolen by the mere nod of four or five men, and so well entrenched that only by new State legislation could these men be reached. This Board was to be composed of the Mayor, Controller, Chamberlain, and Presidents of the Supervisors and Aldermen, so that Tweed, Oakey Hall, and Connolly were certain of places on it. It would seem that those who ran might have read the perils concealed in the Tweed Charter; while the bribery employed to pass it was so colossal that it is hard to understand how it was even temporarily concealed. It is believed that a million was spent in corrupting legislators; the chairman of the conference committee on the Charter admitted later that he took $10,000; and it was shown that Tweed bought five Republican Senators for $40,000 each. Yet many of the best people of New York looked on complacently while the Republicans joined hands with the Democrats, and the Charter passed both houses by enormous majorities.

The *Evening Post* was powerfully aided in combating this iniquity by Manton Marble of the *World* and Dana of the *Sun*. The *Tribune* was upon the same side, though Greeley did not fail to indulge his unsurpassed faculty for wabbling; he went to Albany and said that if he could not get the Charter amended, he would take it as it was, while his journal continued attacking it. The Union League Club energetically opposed it. But the Citizens Association, under the universally esteemed Peter Cooper, was convinced that the Ring had become conservative, and would now stop stealing and take the side of the taxpayers. The *Times*, with similar blindness, hailed the passage of the Tweed Charter as a signal victory for reform, saying (April 6):

If it shall be put into operation by Mayor Hall, with that regard for the general welfare which we have reason to anticipate, we feel sure that our citizens will have reason to count yesterday's work in the Legislature as most salutary and important.

And Tweed saw that Oakey Hall lost no time in appointing him head of the Department of Public Works, and otherwise putting it into operation.

Indeed, the Boss now stood at the apex of his career. One of his creatures, John T. Hoffman, was Governor, another was Mayor, and he, Hall, and Connolly formed a majority of the Board of Special Audit, with authority, as the *Post* said, "to do almost what they please." Almost penniless ten years before, Tweed now had a fortune of more than $3,000,000, and his career had entered upon a period of dazzling splendor. He acquired a fine mansion at Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street, and at his summer home at Greenwich, Conn., the very stalls of his horses were mahogany. He had flashing equipages and gave glittering dinners; he and his retainers fitted up the Americus Club, in Greenwich, where each member had a private room, in princely style; and when his daughter was married that summer her gown cost $4,000 and she received gifts worth $100,000. The voters most impressed by all this were the poor voters among whom in winter Tweed scattered gifts of coal, provisions, and money. The Ring did not forget its family connections. Not even President Grant, remarked the *Post,* had such a taste for nepotism. One of Tweed's sons was Assistant District Attorney and another was Commissioner of Riverside Drive; while four of Sweeney's relatives had fat places.

As Samuel J. Tilden later sarcastically noted, the *Times* was unlucky enough on May 5, 1870, to boast of "reforms made possible by the recent legislation at Albany." That May 5 was the day on which the Board of Special Audit ordered payment of $6,312,500 on the Court House, ninety per cent. of it graft.

But such barefaced looting of the city as had now been carried on for years could not be continued without arous-

ing public anger, and the storm soon burst. The share of graft which the Ring exacted from public contractors had already been shoved up to 85 per cent. The frauds perpetrated in the city election of May 17, 1870, were so flagrant that observers gasped. A suspicion that the city's debts were rising by leaps and bounds grew into conviction. The *Evening Post* and *Tribune* continued their warnings and attacks, and early in the fall the *Times* fully joined them.

How long these assaults would have continued essentially futile, had it not been for a dramatic episode, it is hard to say. This episode grew out of the fact that the Ring, being greedy, made enemies in its own camp. One of the chief was James O'Brien, who was sheriff 1867-70, and had a large personal following. O'Brien distributed his money lavishly while he held office, and retired from a post worth $100,000 a year as poor as when he entered it. To recompense himself, he presented a claim for $200,000 to the Board of Special Audit, and this body, which did not fear him now that he was out of office, rejected it. Tweed knew that it was a mistake, but was overruled. It happened that in December, 1870, the County Auditor, a loyal servant to Tweed, was fatally injured in a sleigh accident, and as a result of some transfers which followed, one of O'Brien's friends obtained a position in the County Bookkeeper's office. There he discovered the bogus accounts used in stealing millions during the erection of the Courthouse, and placed transcripts of them in O'Brien's hands. In vengeful spirit, the ex-sheriff in the early summer of 1871 brought them to the office of the latest recruit to the anti-Tweed ranks, the *Times,* and the *Times* made admirable use of them.

It would be pleasant for historians of journalism to record that one of the great New York newspapers itself conducted an investigation into Tweed's looting of the city and fully exposed him. If any managing editor could claim the credit which has to be given an overturned sleigh and a jealous ex-sheriff, he would be immortal. Why, when the *Evening Post* and *Tribune* had been attacking

the régime of graft for years, did they not cut into the tumor? We may lay part of the blame on journalistic timidity, and the lack at that time of a tradition of investigative enterprise in journalism; but the chief answer lies in the care with which the Ring guarded its secrets. It had seemed for a moment the previous fall to invite inquiry. Connolly, with a parade of injured virtue, asked six-eminent business men—William B. Astor, Moses Taylor, Marshall O. Roberts, and others—to inspect his books, and these six, who commanded public confidence, had reported on Nov. 1 "that the financial affairs of the city, under the charge of the Controller, are administered in a correct and faithful manner." But the Ring's real misdeeds were kept under cover.

The vigor with which the *Post* attacked the Ring slackened during the early months of 1871. Bryant was engrossed in his translations from Homer. Nordhoff quarreled with Isaac Henderson over what the latter thought the undue violence of his denunciation of Tweed, was offered a long vacation with pay on the understanding that he should look for another place, and resigned the managing editorship to Charlton Lewis, who for a time was more cautious of utterance. But by the 1st of July we find the *Evening Post* as vehement as ever.

It was particularly aroused against the Ring by the bloody Orange Riot of July 12, 1871, one of the most disgraceful of the city's outbreaks. The previous year an unprovoked attack had been made upon an Orange picnic at Elm Park by some Irish Catholics who broke down the fence, assailed men, women, and children with revolvers and stones, killed three outright, wounded eleven mortally, and seriously injured forty or fifty. The Orangemen in 1871 prepared to celebrate Boyne Day by a parade, as they had a perfect right to do, and by July 10 it was rumored that the hooligans meant to attack them again. That day the *Post* published a warning editorial, saying the city authorities must prepare to quell the mob "by the quickest means." But Mayor Hall and Superintendent of Police Kelso issued orders that the

police should disperse, not the assailants, but the Orange procession: and this made the *Post* furious. It meant that the Tammany Ring, "with a cynical contempt for law and order, have taken the part of the mob." Very properly, Gov. Hoffman overruled Mayor Hall, and directed that the Orangemen be protected in any lawful assemblage. On the 12th the parade formed, and began its march under a strong escort of police and militia. The more turbulent Irish element was out in force, lining the route threateningly. As the parade passed along Eighth Avenue near Twenty-sixth Street, a shot was fired by an Irishman from a second story window at the Ninth Regiment, and was the signal for other shots and a shower of brickbats and stones. The order to fire was given, the Eighty-fourth Regiment—according to the *Post*—was the first to respond, and before the mob was dispersed the street was full of the dead and dying. The *Evening Post* had nothing but praise for the militia, nothing but abuse for the city government. Bryant penned a ringing editorial upon Tweed:

> New York, like every great city, contains a certain number of idle, ignorant, and lawless people. But these classes are not dangerous to our peace, either by their numbers or by their organization. They are dangerous and injurious only because they are the tools of Tweed, Sweeney, Oakey Hall, Connolly, and the Ring of corruptionists of whom these four persons are the leaders. Depose the Tammany Ring and all danger from the "dangerous classes" will cease. It is because these know themselves to be supported by the Ring, because they are employed when they want employment, salaried when they are idle, succored when they commit petty crimes, pardoned when they are convicted, and flattered at all times by the Tammany Ring, that they have become so audacious and restless. . . .
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> The Tammany Ring purposely panders to the worst and most dangerous elements and passions of our population. It cares nothing for liberty, nothing for the rights of the citizen, nothing for the public peace, for law and order; it cares only to fasten itself upon the city, and chooses to use, for that end, the most corrupt and demoralizing means, and the most lawless and dangerous part of our population. It is the Head of the Mob. It

rules by, and through, and for the Mob; and unless it is struck down New York has not yet seen the worst part of its history.

It was soon struck down. The *Times* began the verbatim publication of O'Brien's evidence on July 22, 1871, with a masterly analysis of it. The *Evening Post's* editorial that afternoon took the view that the *Times's* evidence was in all probability valid to the last figure, that the Ring could not disprove it, and that it made the refusal of the authorities to show their accounts intolerable. During the seven days that the *Times* required for publishing all of O'Brien's transcripts the *Post* carried half a dozen editorials pressing this opinion.

However, the "secret accounts" so courageously brought out by the *Times* offered little more than the starting point of the exposure. They consisted of the dates and amounts of certain payments by Controller Connolly, their objects, and the names of the men who received them. The enormous sums disbursed, taken in connection with the brevity of the time, the inadequacy of the objects, and the recurrence of the same names as recipients, made the public certain that the Ring had stolen on a colossal scale. A single carpenter, for example, had been paid $360,000 for one month's repairs on the new Courthouse. But as yet there was no legal proof against any one official. There was no evidence, sufficient to sustain a civil or criminal action, which disclosed the principals behind the bogus accounts. Moreover, redress could not be sought from the Aldermen, who were allies of the Ring, and powerless under the new Charter anyway; from the District Attorney, who was Tweed's friend; from the grand juries, which were packed; or from the Legislature, which was not in session. Tweed might well exclaim, "What are you going to do about it?"

The *Times*, the *Post*, and other papers could do no more than continue their attacks on the Ring, call for exhibition of the city's books, and express their faith that in the November election punishment would be made certain by the choice of a reform Legislature and a zeal-

ous Attorney-General. Several journals did less. The *World,* for example, was so far misled by Democratic partisanship as to assume an attitude of apology for the Ring. But the work of the *Times* and O'Brien bore its first fruit when on Sept. 4 a great city mass-meeting was held at which a Committee of Seventy was appointed; and a more important result followed ten days later when Controller Connolly, after an interview with Tilden, turned traitor to the Ring, and tried to save himself by resigning and deputing the reformer, Andrew H. Green, to take his place.

For the fight was won, as the *Evening Post* recognized, when the party of good government gained the Controller's books. Tilden obtained the legal opinion of Charles O'Conor, whose name carried the greatest weight, affirming the right of Mr. Green to hold the office, and gave it to the *Evening Post* of Sept. 18 for exclusive publication. It caused Mayor Hall to abandon instantly his intention of trying to eject Mr. Green. With the Controllership in their hands, the reformers were able to protect the city records from destruction, to undertake their careful examination, and to find the clues to judicial proofs lying in the Broadway Bank and elsewhere—clues of which Tilden made admirable use. "New York will carry down through the memory and history of the coming years," said the *Post,* "the fact that Mr. Tilden threw a flood of light into the widened breach of this fortress of fraud, and that he and Mr. Havemeyer, as the only means of saving the city from bankruptcy, thrust perforce . . . Mr. Andrew H. Green, whom they knew to be of stern and honest stuff, into the charge of the depleted treasury." It was only a few months before the leading Ring members were in jail or exile.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

INDEPENDENCE IN POLITICS: THE ELECTIONS OF '72 AND '76

IF any one had told Bryant and Godwin in 1865 that within a half dozen years the party which led the crusade against slavery to victory, and which had carried the nation through the furnace of the war, would seem intolerable to many for its moral laxity and inefficiency, he would not have been believed. It was then the party of youthful idealism, of enthusiasm in a great moral cause, of vigorous achievement. Yet in 1872 the *Evening Post* all but abandoned the Republican banner—it would have done so had the reform elements found a fit leader; and in 1876 the temptation to secede was presented in a new and equally strong form. Though it stayed with the party, in neither campaign did the paper surrender a jot of its independence, and in neither did it give the Republicans enthusiastic support.

There was but one tenable position in the election of 1868 for a journal which had supported Lincoln and the Union throughout the war—to follow Grant; for the Democrats could not be trusted with Reconstruction, while they offended all believers in sound finance by proposing to pay the war bonds in greenbacks. The *Evening Post* declared itself for Grant on Dec. 2, 1867, and published frequent editorials advocating his nomination until it took place six months later. It expressed a wholehearted faith in his courage, patient good temper, administrative energy, and judgment of subordinates. This belief was shared by others as discerning as Bryant. Lowell informed Leslie Stephen that Grant had always chosen able lieutenants, that he was not pliable, and that he would make good use of his opportunity to be an independent President.

The cordiality of the *Evening Post* for Grant was increased by its distaste for his Democratic rival. Bryant wrote to his friend Salmon P. Chase before the Democratic Convention, urging him to take a receptive attitude, and Chase replied hopefully; but it was Horatio Seymour who obtained the nomination, and for Seymour the *Post* had only contempt. A mere local politician, it termed him; it recalled how as the "copperhead" Governor of New York he had displayed a plentiful lack of both dignity and sagacity, and it believed him a weak creature, who would be controlled by dangerous men like George H. Pendleton and Francis Blair.

The *Times* was heartily for Grant, and so was the *Sun*, Charles A. Dana helping write the campaign biography of him. The *Tribune* was of course loyally Republican. It had to forget a good many rash—though, as it proved, too nearly true—words of the previous year, when, irritated by Grant's loyalty to President Johnson, it had said that his prominence in politics was due merely to "the dazzling and seductive splendor of military fame," and that he would make "a timid, hesitating, unsympathetic President." But the *Tribune* was used to retracting impolitic judgments, and was soon fighting with the *World* in that hammer and tongs style of which Greeley and Manton Marble were masters.

The disillusionment that followed so rapidly upon Grant's inauguration was bitter to the whole of the decent Republican press. It is one of the most creditable chapters in American journalism that so many newspapers—Greeley's *Tribune*, Horace White's Chicago *Tribune*, Samuel Bowles's Springfield *Republican*, Murat Halstead's Cincinnati *Commercial*, and the *Evening Post*—had the courage to assert their independence of the Republican party when it fell into unworthy hands. Grant's failure was more bitter to the *Evening Post*, the Springfield *Republican*, and other low-tariff journals than it was to the high-tariff New York *Tribune;* it was more painful to the *Evening Post* and other organs which advocated a mild Southern policy than to the *Nation*, which

advocated a fairly severe one. But they all took a protestant attitude which was far in advance of that of the general public.

All administrations begin with a sort of political honeymoon, in which every one gives the new President a fair field, and criticism is temporarily reserved. For some months the *Post* tried hard to believe that Grant was destined to solve satisfactorily all the problems bequeathed him by Andrew Johnson. It praised his inaugural speech highly. The principal task before him, it declared, was to get rid of the bummers, camp-followers, and contractors:

> The first and especial work which Gen. Grant undertakes is to clear the government of those who take its money without giving an equivalent; lobbyists, railway projectors, speculators in grants of every form, whisky thieves, revenue swindlers, gold sharks, and the whole train of useless and costly hangers-on. These men are no longer an outside band of robbers who are unimportant enough to be disregarded. They have grown to be a great power; if united, perhaps they would be the greatest political power in the land. It is a work scarcely second to that of destroying Lee's army itself, to destroy the system of plunder which now threatens our institutions. (Feb. 9, 1869.)

The task second in importance, the *Evening Post* believed, was a sharp reduction in the wartime tariff, which David A. Wells, Special Commissioner of Revenue, had just shown to be miraculously effective in making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Under it, said Bryant, the pig-iron manufacturers doubled their capital annually, while the workmen lived worse than before; one of the two companies which enjoyed a monopoly of salt had earned $4,600,000 on a capital of $600,000 in seven years; and the lumber companies, Canadian competition being shut out, were piling up enormous fortunes while housing grew ever costlier. The *Post* demanded also a revision of the uneconomic wartime revenue system, under which 16,000 different articles were taxed; they might advantageously be reduced to fewer than 200. It asked for measures paving the way to a resumption of

specie payments, such as the accumulation of a large gold reserve in the Treasury, and the passage of legislation authorizing contracts to pay in gold. Railway jobbery, involving the wasteful distribution of the national domain, should be stopped, while civil service reform was prominent in the *Evening Post* programme. Of course, it wished military rule in the South brought to an end as speedily as possible, and the States placed upon their old footing.

But all of Bryant's and Parke Godwin's high expectations failed. The *Post* thought Grant's Cabinet weak, and was especially shocked by his choice of the protectionist George S. Boutwell to be Secretary of the Treasury. It was equally offended by the selection of Elihu Washburne to be Minister to France, and Gen. Daniel Sickles to Spain—Spanish relations then being highly important on account of Cuba. There was no change in the tariff until 1870, when a new act reduced the duties on only one important protected commodity, pig iron, while it increased them on a half dozen. The revenue system was left in its complex iniquity. Secretary Boutwell did nothing effective to bring the nation back to a specie basis, while the *Evening Post* sharply condemned his action in the "Black Friday" crisis (September, 1869) in selling $4,000,000 worth of gold without notice, and thus breaking the corner in gold which Jay Gould and James Fisk, jr., were trying to build up. This, it said, was taking sides unnecessarily in a battle between two sets of gamblers, when the Treasury had always before acted on the principle that all sales of gold should be public, with ample advance notice of the amounts to be sold, and should be ordered solely upon public grounds, without reference to speculation. Reconstruction, going from bad to worse, was by 1870 a confused mixture of grasping carpet-baggers, downtrodden whites, corrupt Legislatures, and ignorant, poverty-stricken negro voters. Grant's one marked display of energy had been in an effort to force the annexation of Santo Domingo, a measure which the *Post* abominated.

Two months after Grant's administration began, the Chicago *Tribune* harshly attacked him. The *Post* then pleaded for patience, but by midsummer of 1870 it was growing restive.

The last straw for the *Evening Post* was Grant's dismissal of his two ablest Cabinet members. He asked for the resignation of Attorney-General Ebenezer Hoar in June, 1870, sacrificing him for the votes of Southern Senators promised in behalf of the Santo Domingo treaty. Four months later, Gen. Jacob Cox was forced out of the Interior Department simply because the politicians wished to raid it for spoils. Already Sumner had been deprived, by Grant's orders, of the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, a slap in the face to the great body of liberal and intellectual Northerners who had admired Sumner ever since he had come forward as an anti-slavery leader. The dismissal of Motley from the post of Minister to England in the fall of 1870 angered Bryant, as it did all other American men of letters. When Secretary Cox resigned, the *Post* headed its editorial (Oct. 31, 1870): "General Grant's Unconditional Surrender"—meaning his surrender to the politicians:

> Not even Buchanan's interference in Kansas was more gross and unblushing than President Grant's attempt to coerce the Missouri Republicans to do his will and not their own. No President except Andrew Johnson has ever so openly tried, by wholesale removals from office and by the appointment of his favorites, to impose his "policy" upon the party.
>
> The letters of General Cox, now published, show that in the practice of the smaller devices of politicians the President has been no less ready. The Secretary, who came into the Cabinet as the especial friend and representative of civil service reform, is forced to leave the Cabinet because the President insists, contrary to Gen. Cox's desires, upon letting political committees levy tribute upon the poor clerks in the Interior Department.

Three days later, under the caption "The President and His Policy," the *Post* joined those organs—the Chi-

cago *Tribune,* Springfield *Republican,* and Dana's and Greeley's journals—which had already declared war:

> He has now been twenty months in office, and if we look back over the leading and most conspicuous acts of his Administration, we find only the San Domingo treaty, defeated by those who would gladly support him in everything right or wise; the gross interference with the elections in Missouri; and the disgrace—so far as he could disgrace them—of Mr. Hoar, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Cox. That is a record of which General Grant will not be proud in those days of retirement from public life which await him.

The Liberal Republican movement in the East began to assume shape when the Free Trade League called a conference upon revenue and tariff reform in New York city for Nov. 22, 1870. It was attended by Bryant, Schurz, E. L. Godkin, Horace White, Samuel Bowles, Gen. Cox, former Commissioner Wells, and Charles Francis Adams, with some others. The first five named represented respectively the *Evening Post,* the St. Louis *Westliche Post,* the *Nation,* the Chicago *Tribune,* and the Springfield *Republican,* and the first four are all on the list of editors of the *Evening Post.* James G. Blaine, the Speaker, was so disturbed by this conference that he journeyed to Chicago to tell Horace White that he meant to give the tariff reformers a majority of the Ways and Means Committee. Meanwhile, in Missouri, Carl Schurz and B. Gratz Brown had already launched their insurgent movement, and by a coalition with the Democrats that same month swept the State. Everywhere the elements in favor of civil service reform, fiscal reform, low tariff and cleaner government began drawing together.

Just how far should the Liberal Republican movement go? Schurz by the spring of 1871 was intent upon forming a new party, while men like Sumner wished to stay within the old party and reform it. The Chicago *Tribune,* the Springfield *Republican,* and the Cincinnati *Commercial* were soon supporting Schurz's plan, while the *Evening Post* and the *Nation* held back. They were sympathetic with Liberal Republicanism, but they did not

commit themselves to it. Bryant was as reluctant to give up his Republican allegiance now as he had been to forsake the Democratic standard in 1844, and he assailed the Administration without assailing the party. The *Post* declared in March, 1871, that the Republican organization was substantially sound; that it distrusted Grant and the politicians, but knew that the rank and file had resisted such follies as the deposition of Sumner and the Santo Domingo treaty. Next month, after the Liberal gathering at Cincinnati, it defined the movement as intended only "to bring back the Republican party to sound and constitutional legislation." It would have been a dramatic display of independence for the *Post* to have broken with the regulars, as it was to do in 1884, but the event showed that it was well it remained lukewarm. When the Liberal Republicans shipwrecked their reform effort by naming a candidate quite unacceptable to the *Post*, it could change its attitude instantly from sympathy to hostility and derision.

E. L. Godkin relates that in the spring of 1864 he was invited to a breakfast in New York at which he found Wendell Phillips, Bryant, and one or two other men. Greeley entered and approached the host, who was standing by the fire talking with Bryant, but the poet ignored his fellow-editor. "Don't you know Mr. Greeley?" the host inquired in an audible whisper. Bryant's whisper came back more audibly still: "No, I don't; he's a blackguard—he's a blackguard!"

This prejudice upon Bryant's part, largely identical with the prejudice which made him refuse to speak to another editor whose principles and personality were both offensive to him, Thurlow Weed, had its share in the *Evening Post's* hostility to Greeley when the Liberal Republicans nominated him for President. Bryant remembered that in 1849 Greeley had commenced a reply to an editorial in the *Post* with the words: "You lie, villain! wilfully, wickedly, basely lie!" It must also be considered that Greeley's high tariff views were anathema to the *Post*, that his readiness to haul down the Union flag

at various critical moments in the Civil War had provoked the indignation of other editors, and that his extremely radical reconstruction policy had offended all moderate organs.

The news that the Liberal Republican Convention had nominated Greeley for President was telegraphed to New York on the evening of May 3, 1872. Bryant next morning was late in reaching the office. A vigorous discussion was going on, says Mr. J. Ranken Towse, over the character of the editorial comment to be made. "It was ended suddenly by the entrance, in hot haste, of Mr. Bryant, who said briefly, 'I will attend to that editorial myself,' and promptly shut himself up in his room. The resultant article—cool, logical, bitter, but not violent—was distinctive in its animating spirit of contemptuous scorn, and carried a sharp sting in its closing assertion that in the case of a candidate for the highest honor at the disposal of the country, it was essential that the candidate should be, at least, a gentleman."

W. A. Linn, long managing editor of the *Evening Post,* saw Bryant a moment. "Well," the poet observed with a quiet twinkle, "there are some good points in Grant's Administration, after all."

The news was in every way a shock to the paper. When the Liberal Republican Convention opened, the *Post* had been filled with as high hopes for its success as those entertained by the Chicago *Tribune,* Cincinnati *Commercial,* or Springfield *Republican.* It had implored the leaders to make their enterprise "a movement for genuine reform, and not a mere antagonism to persons and Administrations"; it had warned them that they must choose a strong man for Presidential nominee, for the people admired Grant's strength of personality. Judge David Davis was not sufficiently a statesman, Gov. B. Gratz Brown of Missouri lacked experience, and "as for Mr. Greeley, his nomination would be a deathblow to the reform movement, because he is the embodiment of centralization and monopoly." Its favorites were Charles Francis Adams, Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, and

Gov. John M. Palmer of that State, in the order named. Had either of the first two been named, upon an acceptable platform, the *Post* would have supported him; but not the erratic, simple-minded prophet of high tariff, Greeley, who, the *Post's* special correspondent at the Convention reported, was pushed forward by a combination of politicians against the reformers.

Bryant's editorial was one of two in the *Evening Post* that day. That given the leading position, written probably by Charlton M. Lewis, was entitled "The Fiasco at Cincinnati," and was just such an editorial as appeared in dozens of other disheartened newspapers. It declared that the Convention, so big with promise, had gone the way of many a similar assemblage, surrendering its lofty principles to the wirepullers. The *Post's* blow from the shoulder was struck by Bryant in the second column. He gave his editorial the mild title, "Why Mr. Greeley Should Not Be Supported for the Presidency," but each of the numbered paragraphs was vitriolic.

First, said Bryant, Greeley lacked the needed courage, firmness, and consistency. His course during the Civil War had been one prolonged wabble, which at its best moments was irresolute, and at its worst was cowardly. Second, his political associates were so bad that his administration, if he were elected, could not escape corruption. Here Bryant referred to such of Greeley's friends as R. E. Fenton, the leader of those New York city Republicans, who, leagued with the Tammany Ring, had done so much to help Tweed do business. The *Times*, which had exposed Tweed, vigorously insisted upon the same point. The third objection, wrote Bryant, was that Greeley had no settled political principles, with one exception, and the fourth was the exception. "He is a thorough-going, bigoted protectionist, a champion of one of the most arbitrary and grinding systems of monopoly ever known in any country." When in 1870 the duty on pig iron was reduced from $9 a ton to $7, Greeley had told Grant that he would make it $100 a ton if he could. The fifth objection to Greeley, the climax of the

editorial, lay in "the grossness of his manners," as Bryant put it. "With such a head as is on his shoulders, the affairs of the nation could not, under his direction, be wisely administered; with such manners as his, they could not be administered with common decorum." By this, Bryant did not refer to Greeley's slovenly dress, nor to his use of the lie direct, but meant a certain Johnsonian grossness which he thought Greeley permitted himself in the drawing-room.

Taken as a whole, the editorial was a regrettably extreme attack upon a man who, if erratic and uncouth, was also the soul of kindliness and sincerity; and Samuel Bowles was justified in complaining that the *Post* showed personal feeling. Yet the fierce and contemptuous attitude of Bryant by no means stood isolated. The *Times* that day called Greeley's nomination "a sad farce," said that the first impulse of every one was to laugh, and declared that "if any one man could send a great nation to the dogs, that man is Mr. Greeley." He would disorganize every department, commit the government to every crude illusion from Fourierism to vegetarianism, and embroil it with every foreign country. Schurz was heartsick, and for some time refused to support the nominee, while the German leaders and newspapers, from which much had been hoped, were almost unanimously hostile. In a number of States independents openly repudiated the ticket. E. L. Godkin, of the *Nation,* was totally disgusted, for he detested Greeley's high tariff views. He had written as early as 1863 that Greeley "has no great grasp of mind, no great political insight," and now his biting pen did more than that of any other writer to defeat the candidate.

The *Atlantic Monthly* promptly fell in behind Grant. Manton Marble of the *World* had watched the Cincinnati Convention with a hopefulness equaling, but differing from, Bryant's. Now he lashed out at the Convention's mistake, stayed with the journal long enough to express wholehearted dislike of Greeley, and then retired so that the *World* might give him unenthusiastic support.

Harper's Weekly brought out the absurdities of Greeley's candidacy in striking fashion. Thomas Nast's cartoons kept the old editor in a ridiculous light week after week—now devouring, with a wry face, a bowl of boiling porridge labeled "My own words and deeds," now at his Chappaqua farm seated well out on a limb, which he was earnestly sawing off between himself and the tree. Greeley's chief assistance in New York, aside from the *Tribune,* came from Dana and the *Sun;* indeed, Dana had come out for his eventual nomination as early as 1868, when almost no one was thinking of it. The other Democratic newspapers, as the *Express,* climbed rather grumblingly on the Greeley bandwagon; since Bennett's death the *Herald* had not been of their number.

For a time the *Evening Post,* in its intense dissatisfaction with the candidate, had some hope that another nomination could be effected. It suggested such an attempt, and that the selection be made by an assembly of leaders, not left to the "dangerous machinery of a convention." The Free Trade League made itself the instrument of this effort, and called a meeting at Steinway Hall on May 30, to be presided over by Bryant. Gen. Jacob Cox, ex-Commissioner Wells, and others gave it their support, but the gathering came to nothing. In June the *Post* was placed definitely behind Grant. The campaign was dismal for it, as for all other conscientious journals. It was impossible for even the *Times* to be enthusiastic over Grant, or even Dana over Greeley. The *Evening Post's* attitude toward the regular Republican nominee was precisely that which the Springfield *Republican* took towards the Liberal Republican candidate. "Support the ticket, but don't gush," Bowles had telegraphed his subordinates from Cincinnati. How far Bryant was from abandoning his criticism of the President is evident from an August editorial entitled "Grant's Real Character."

The *Post* objected to the "Napoleon-Cæsar-Tweed" theory of Grant, the belief that he was a corrupt man of colossal ambition, egotism, and determination, but it said

nothing more in his defense than that he was "a plain American citizen, with his average defects, his average ignorance, his average intelligence, and his average vices and virtues." It made fun of his ignorance of political economy—he had said that the nation could never be poor while it had the gold locked in the Rockies. It scored his liking for money, gifts, good dinners, flashy associates, fast horses, and "style." The *Post* spoke thus caustically of Grant because Bryant had no idea of stultifying the newspaper, even to help beat Greeley; but it did it the more readily because it knew Greeley had not a chance. The mass of the party was with Grant, and he received a plurality of three quarters of a million.

When Greeley's insanity and death followed so tragically upon his humiliating defeat, the *Evening Post* made belated amends for its campaign severity. Its obituary editorial of Nov. 30 was marked by a generosity which it might well have shown earlier:

> Without money, family, friends, or any of the usual supports by which men are helped into eminence, Mr. Greeley won his place of influence and distinction by the sheer force of his intellectual ability and the determination of his character. By good natural abilities, by industry, by temperance, by sympathy with what is noblest and best in human nature, and by earnest purpose, the ignorant, friendless, unknown printer's boy of a few years since became the powerful and famous journalist, whose words went forth to the ends of the earth, affecting the destinies of all mankind.

II

An entirely different question was posed by the election of 1876—the question whether the long friendship of Bryant and the former sub-editors for Samuel J. Tilden should carry the *Evening Post* over to the Democratic side. The decision finally made is of peculiar interest, for it shows how little Bryant was inclined to let personal considerations sway him upon any public question.

Early in the thirties, while Bryant and other editors were wrangling over the Bank, an ardent Democrat from

New Lebanon, N. Y., named Elam Tilden, visited the *Evening Post,* and introduced his son Samuel, a boy in roundabouts. Bryant often spoke in later years of the impression made on him by the youth's precocity, handsome features, and cultivated speech. A few years later young Tilden studied at New York University, and improved his acquaintance with the poet. When in the fall of 1841 Bryant made one of his country excursions, he chose New Lebanon for headquarters, and visited the Tilden family. The ties between Tilden and the *Post* were much strengthened after 1848, when Bigelow became junior editor. We have seen that they were acquainted as young lawyers, and Bigelow was State prison inspector at the same time that Tilden began his political career in the Assembly. Tilden frequently visited the *Post* and discussed political topics, it was there that he published an explanation of his stand in the campaign of 1860, and it was with the freedom of an old friend that he told Bigelow that he and Bryant shared the blood-guilt of the conflict.

After the war his visits were less frequent. But he made the *Evening Post* his mouthpiece when, in 1871-2, he, ex-Mayor Havemeyer, and Andrew H. Green pushed home the fight against the Tweed Ring. The *Post* always credited Tilden with being the chief agent in proving the actual guilt of Tweed's lieutenants. During the spring of 1873 an acrimonious controversy was carried on between Tilden and the *Times,* turning in the main upon a new Charter proposed at Albany, which Tilden attacked and the *Times* defended. Tilden used the *Post* for the publication of his letters, and Bryant editorially supported him.

As Governor, Tilden invited Bryant in the early weeks of 1875 to pay him a visit at the Executive Mansion, and the editor accepted. Both branches of the Legislature tendered Bryant a public reception, the first time that the State had paid such an honor to any man of letters. At a dinner party on Tilden's birthday, Bryant, in toasting the Governor, said that the public would not be displeased

if his present position proved a stepping-stone to the Presidency. At all times the *Post*, like other New York papers, expressed golden opinions of Tilden's administration, and in especial of his attacks upon the "Canal Ring," a bi-partisan organization which had gained huge sums through fraudulent contracts for the repair of the State canals.

It was therefore natural that when in 1876 the election of a successor to Grant approached, Tilden's friends had a strong hope that Bryant and the *Evening Post* would lend the Governor their support. The newspaper gave no advance hint of its attitude. When Hayes was nominated by the Republicans on June 16, it, like all other independent journals, was pleased. Its overshadowing fear had been that Blaine, whom it detested as dishonest, would be named, and it saw in Hayes as good a man as its own previous favorite, Bristow of Kentucky. While some sneered at the nomination as negative and weak, the *Post* predicted that it would "turn out to be positive and strong." On the other hand, it thought the platform poor. It called the civil service plank platitudinous and empty, and the currency plank, which temporized with regard to specie resumption, worse still.

Nor did the *Evening Post* immediately commit itself after the Democratic Convention. Over Tilden's nomination it rejoiced even more than over that of Hayes. It recognized his sterling integrity and zeal as a reformer and was delighted that he had beaten both Tammany and the mediocre Western aspirants, Senator Thurman and Gov. Hendricks. But it did not openly pronounce for him, and its comment upon the Democratic platform maintained a careful impartiality. "In respect to financial reform their position is worse than that of the Republicans; in respect to a reform of the civil service they offer nothing better; in respect to revenue reform they have done better." The decision was left until after the 4th of July.

All the influence of Bigelow, who sometimes still wrote editorials for the *Post*, was in favor of Tilden. He was

the candidate's campaign manager, and would be Secretary of State if Tilden won. So was all the influence of Parke Godwin, Bryant's son-in-law and formerly a part owner. Bryant's own friendship for Tilden weighed heavily in the balance. But the decision was not, as the public supposed, Bryant's alone. Some years earlier the *Evening Post* had been reorganized as a joint stock company, and Bryant held exactly half, not a majority, of the shares. The other half were owned by Isaac Henderson, the able, smooth-tongued, rubicund business manager, who had been a partner since the early fifties, and whose influence as Bryant became older gradually extended outside the business office to the editorial rooms. His one anxiety for the *Evening Post* was that it should pay fat dividends, and he was no more scrupulous as to the means than the business managers of other newspapers. Mr. J. Ranken Towse tells us how distinct by 1876 was the influence he exerted upon the editorial policy:

> It was not often that legitimate exception could be taken to its utterances, but as much could not be said of its unaccountable reticences. For some of these there may have been a good and sufficient reason, at which I cannot even guess, but there were others which could be understood only too easily. The simple fact is that William Cullen Bryant, though editor-in-chief and half owner, was by no means in absolute control of the paper. Between the counting room and the editorial department there was a constant, silent, irrepressible conflict, not to say antagonism—for I have always been convinced that the limits of it were defined by some sort of agreement, written or tacit—whenever the question at issue was one of direct commercial profit, which often acted as a bar to the candid discussion of inconvenient topics.

When on June 29 the *Post* printed its warm but noncommittal praise of Tilden's nomination, Henderson, who knew that commercial sentiment in New York was in favor of the Republicans, came upstairs and was closeted with Bryant in a long discussion of editorial policy. The next important editorial utterance, July 5, was an angry attack upon the Democratic platform. The Democratic Party was condemned for its "knavish" indifference

to sound currency, and was represented as an unsafe organization to be given charge of Southern affairs while they remained so unsettled. On July 6 the *Post* remarked that the hard-money Tilden, running in 1876 upon a soft-money platform, presented an exact parallel to the high-tariff Greeley running in 1872 upon a low-tariff platform; that "the two canvasses are alike in their teachery, their evasiveness, their shameless surrender of principle." On July 10 it declared fully for Hayes.

Bigelow and Parke Godwin have published a number of Bryant's letters relating to this stand by the *Evening Post*. One is his refusal of Tilden's request that he let his name head the ticket of Democratic electors. Another is his letter to J. C. Derby explaining that, while he believed Tilden a truer statesman than Hayes, he thought the Republican principles, especially with regard to sound money and the merit system, so much superior that it was impossible to detach the *Evening Post* from the party that had won the Civil War. He implied that his control of the paper was complete, and said that its utterances had suited him in everything except some details; while Henderson explicitly stated to the somewhat incredulous Derby that this was true. But Bigelow's and Godwin's own letters of the time have not been printed, and they show a strong belief that Bryant did not make the *Post's* decision. It is sufficient to quote one by Bigelow, dated Albany, July 14:

> The principal result of my talk with Henderson was to satisfy me that—[Bigelow simply made a long, wavy line]. The rest I will tell you when I see you.
>
> In can hardly trust myself to talk about the *Post*. I hope to be spared the necessity of writing about it. But the *Evening Post* that you and I have known and honored, which educated us and through which we have educated others in political science, I fear no longer exists. The paper which bears its name is no more our *Evening Post* than the present *Commercial Advertiser* is the sheet once edited under that name by Col. Stone. I only wish Mr. Bryant had his name stricken out of it.

Allowance must be made for Bigelow's chagrin. The

probability is that Bryant at the end of June was wavering; that Henderson advanced his arguments respectfully but firmly; and that Bryant of his own free will placed the *Evening Post* behind Hayes. After all, his old associates in attacking Grant, the Liberal Republican leaders, flocked back to the G. O. P. He had the resumption of specie payments close to his heart, and was alarmed by the soft-money convictions of western Democrats; he feared the shock to hopes of civil service reform if a horde of office-hungry Democrats poured into Washington; and the recent conduct of the Democratic House gave him reason to think they would do little for tariff reduction. It was perfectly logical for the journal to stand with the party which it had helped found and had ever since supported, while it would have been hard to find a logical justification for leaving it. Throughout the campaign it stood by Hayes, though with very moderate zeal, and it rejoiced when the Electoral Commission gave him the Presidency. Bryant later wrote that he had never before felt so little interest in a contest for the Presidency. No one ever knew for whom he voted on election day, for, saying with a smile that the ballot was a secret institution, he always refused to tell; Bigelow believed that he voted for neither candidate.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

TWO REBEL LITERARY EDITORS

AMID the eulogies which followed Bryant's death in 1878, a dissenting note was struck by that short-lived illustrated newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*. After a disparaging estimate of his poetry, it remarked that he, as one of our most celebrated literary men, should have made the *Evening Post* the country's leading critical authority. "It utterly failed to become such an authority. Indeed, it would be hard to say what benefits the existence of the *Evening Post* has conferred upon literature. We say this in all kindness, and with a full knowledge that there were difficulties in the way of creating a literary journal. . . ."

There was force in this statement of an opportunity missed, though the *Graphic* exaggerated the *Post's* deficiencies, and failed to consider whether they might not be due to lack of public appreciation of anything better. The truth is that till 1881 there was no American newspaper whose literary criticism would now be considered of high standards. This is said with due respect to George Ripley, who after years at Harvard, at Brook farm, and in the ministry which made him personally intimate with most of the New England authors, joined the *Tribune* in 1849 and remained in its harness until his death. He gave himself up to literary criticism with an industry equaled in our journalistic history by that of W. P. Garrison alone. He began as a man of wide culture; he was so devoted to study and research that in time there were few subjects upon which he could not supply facts and ideas of his own; he was conscientious, unprejudiced, and accustomed to refer to first principles. Tyndall wrote that he had "the grasp of a philosopher and the good taste of a gentleman." His reviews were

easily the best in any American journal, and he had some assistance from Bayard Taylor, John Hay, and other able men. But he was too mild, while he had no thought of sending each new book to a specialist.

Through simple inattention, no regular chair was established for a literary editor by the *Post* till after the Civil War. In August, 1860, young William Dean Howells applied for such a place, bearing a letter from James T. Fields of the *Atlantic,* who said: "He chooses the *Post* of all papers in the Union, and if you get him for your literary work, etc., you will get a lad who will be worth his weight, etc., etc., etc." Bigelow's sagacity for once failed him, and Howells was turned away. Later an application from Park Benjamin was rejected. There was little room for reviews during the war, and little inclination on the part of the public to think of pure literature. But when Bryant returned from his last trip to Europe and settled down to translate Homer he finally saw the need for such an editor.

In April, 1867, there reached New York from the South a slight, gaunt man of forty-three, the emaciation of whose face was partly concealed by his heavy beard, but who was as clearly in bad health as in reduced circumstances. He was received with honor by the city's growing colony of former Confederates. This was John R. Thompson, who had edited the *Southern Literary Messenger* for thirteen years previous to the war. He was employed by *Albion,* a weekly devoted to English interests, and then by its feeble successor, *Every Afternoon.* Meanwhile, E. C. Stedman had introduced him to Bryant, while Bryant's old friend, William Gilmore Simms, wrote recommending him to notice and assistance. In May, 1868, he was appointed literary editor of the *Evening Post,* a position which he held five years.

Thompson's training seemed admirable for the place. He had proved himself one of the ablest conductors of the *Southern Literary Messenger,* which Poe had edited before him. He gave it not only his personal services without return, but spent his small patrimony to keep it

alive. Frank R. Stockton and Donald G. Mitchell among Northern authors received their first recognition from him, while the small band of Southern literary men regarded the magazine as their section's chief exponent. When in 1859, at John P. Kennedy's suggestion, he sought the librarianship of the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, Longfellow and Edward Everett were among those who wrote recommending him. During the war, while for a time Virginia's Assistant Secretary of State and later editor of the Richmond *Record*, he was a kind of laureate of the Confederacy, his spirited verses following many military events of importance. "Ashby," "The Burial of Latane," and "Lee to the Rear" are known by every Southern schoolboy, while "Music in Camp" is in every anthology of historical verse. In 1864 he escaped to England on a blockade runner to carry on publicity for the South, and not only worked on the *Index*, a Confederate organ, but contributed to *Blackwood's*, *Punch*, the *Standard*, and other periodicals. He was a frequent visitor at Carlyle's home in Cheyne Row, and is mentioned in Carlyle's "Reminiscences", Tennyson entertained him several times at Farringford, and he knew Bulwer, Kingsley, and Thackeray.

He soon became one of the best-liked men on the *Post* staff. He wrote the extensive review of the first volume of Bryant's translation of the Iliad in February, 1870, and that of the second that summer; and Bryant came to have him much at his home. There was no more charming conversationalist in New York society. "He had read so variously, observed so minutely, and retained so tenaciously the results of his reading and observation," Bryant wrote later in the Post, "that he was never at a loss for a topic and never failed to invest what he was speaking of with a rare and original interest. His fund of anecdote was almost inexhaustible, and his ability to illustrate any subject by apt quotation no less remarkable." John Esten Cooke thought him an unexcelled story-teller, and R. H. Stoddard has agreed.

He was a rebel to be loved, we are told by Watson R.

Sperry, later managing editor. "A lot of tall, straggling Virginia gentlemen, ex-soldiers, I fancy, all of them, began to visit the office. Mr. Thompson had a big man's beard, a delicate body, and a sensitive, feminine nature. He was a bit punctilious, but kindness itself." His careful attention to dress, verging on foppishness, was less out of place in Bryant's office than it would have been in Greeley's or Dana's. J. Ranken Towse speaks of his personal charm, a reflection of his experience in the best Richmond and London circles. "Though not a marvel of erudition or critical genius, he was a pleasant, cultivated gentleman, refined in taste and manner, genial, humorous, and abundantly capable."

Unfortunately, Thompson added little to the *Post's* literary reputation. In large part this was because of his wretched health, for he steadily wasted away with consumption, was much out of the office, and maintained his energy only by following his doctor's orders to take large doses of whisky. Early in 1872 his condition was so bad that when Bryant set out for Cuba, the Bahamas, and Mexico, he took Thompson along to escape the rigor of winter. Thompson, moreover, was an essayist and poet rather than a critic. He prepared a book upon his European experiences which was in the bindery of Derby & Jackson when fire destroyed it; and his letters of travel on various vacation tours, with some editorial essays, were his best work for the paper. His most famous poem, the translation of Nadaud's "Carcassone," was written in the *Evening Post* office—"the unfinished manuscript was kicking around on his desk for several days," says Sperry—but published in *Lippincott's;* its popularity rather irritated him.

Even had his health been sound and his critical faculties the best, Thompson could not have made the *Post* a good literary organ in the present-day sense. It did not want critical or analytic reviews. An entertaining summary or paraphrase would appeal far more to the general reader. Moreover, there was a feeling that American literature was a delicate organism, which needed petting

and might have its spirit broken by harsh words. Mr. Towse justly says of Thompson: "His condemnation was apt to be expressed in terms of modified praise. He confined himself largely to what was explanatory or descriptive, though his articles were written fluently and elegantly, were interesting, and had a news, if no great descriptive value." Bryant reviewed many of the younger poets with the same benignancy with which Howells used to review young novelists in the Easy Chair. The first important volumes of which Thompson wrote notices were the concluding volumes of Froude's England, Kinglake's Crimean War, and Motley's United Netherlands, Raphael Pumpelly's travels, Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad," and Miss Alcott's "Little Women." The notices consisted of scissors work and tepid comment.

During the years just after the war, indeed, the *Post's* columns were singularly devoid of permanent literary interest. The Cary sisters, Miles O'Reilly, and Helen Hunt Jackson contributed verse, and there were various occasional poems, like E. C. Stedman's "Crete" (1867) and Holmes's Harvard dinner poem of 1866. Samuel Osgood, for years a prominent minister at the Unitarian Church of the Messiah (Bryant's church), and a voluminous writer on historical and religious topics, printed many essays. Charles Lanman contributed his interesting recollections of two famous Washington editors, Gales and Seaton, of the *National Intelligencer,* and there were others of the same small caliber.

The most noteworthy contributions were those, almost the last of his long career, from Bryant's own pen. The aged poet, after the death of his wife and the conclusion of his translations from Homer, wrote fewer editorials, and many of these at the request of friends, in support of a worthy charity or civic movement. But he did like to write short essays for the editorial page, often printed in minion, on topics ranging from macaronic verse to history and politics. Despite what Hazlitt says of the prose style of poets, that of Bryant was always of unmistakable distinction. When he took such a subject as the beauties

of winter as seen at Roslyn (January, 1873), the result was worthy of permanent preservation:

A light but continuous rain fell on Saturday and froze on everything it touched, and wetted the snow only enough to change it on the trees from white to the clearest and most brilliant crystal. So overloaded were they with their icy diamonds that tall cedars bent themselves like nodding plumes, and pines and hemlocks bowed down like tents of cloth of silver over the snowy carpet underneath. The russet leaves of the beeches shone out like frozen leaves of gold, and trunks and boughs and twigs of deciduous trees were as if they had been enameled with melted glass from their very roots to the most delicate extremities. On Sunday morning the sun shone out upon such a landscape as this, to light up, but not to melt, the silvery sheen and the diamond sparkle which winter had sprinkled over all outdoors. One who breathed the exhilaration of the air of that day, and looked upon its wonderful beauty, could hardly find it in the heart to regret the destruction that it caused. But all day long the overloaded trees yielded to the weight of ice, and one who listened could hear in every direction, like the discharge of infantry, the crashing of the falling branches. In some cases whole trees were stripped, leaving only the shattered trunk, a torn and broken shaft with all its glory strewn upon the snow.

Early in 1873 it became evident that Thompson's condition was desperate. The *Post* in February, upon the advice of his physician, sent him to Colorado, a step which proved a mistake. He became rapidly worse, started back on April 17, reached the city in a dying state, and passed away at Isaac Henderson's home on April 30. His funeral in New York was attended by Bryant, Stedman, Richard Watson Gilder, Gen. Pryor, Whitelaw Reid, R. H. Stoddard (whom he made his literary executor, but who did nothing with his manuscripts) and others of prominence; while in Richmond on the same day a meeting was held in his honor by the pulpit, bar, and press in the House of Delegates. His last incomplete review was of the poems of a Southerner, Henry Timrod. Not until 1920 were his own poems collected in a volume sponsored by his alma mater, the University of Virginia.

For some time his place was left unsupplied while Bryant searched for a successor; for the editor had come to the belated conclusion that the literary editorship should be the most important place of its kind in America. While the search was going on, in 1875, the year the *Post* moved into the fine Bryant Building which Henderson built for it at a cost of $750,000, George Cary Eggleston joined the staff.

Eggleston was a successful young author of thirty-five, though by no means so famous as his elder brother Edward Eggleston, whose "Hoosier Schoolmaster," appearing in book form in 1872, had sold 20,000 copies within a year. He had crowded into these thirty-five years as much experience as many active men get in a lifetime. Born in Indiana, educated in Virginia, a soldier throughout the war in the Confederate army, later a practicing lawyer in Illinois and Mississippi, he had come to Brooklyn and in 1870 became an editorial writer on Theodore Tilton's Brooklyn *Union*. Soon afterward he and Edward Eggleston took joint charge of *Hearth and Home*, and began putting life into that moribund publication. It was in this effort that Edward Eggleston seized upon his brother's experiences as a schoolmaster at Riker's Ridge, Indiana, as a basis for his famous novel. The two were on the high road to success when the magazine was purchased, and both took to free lancing. George Cary Eggleston settled down to writing boys' books and magazine articles in an orchard-framed farmhouse in New Jersey. He had already published, first in the *Atlantic* and then in book form, one of the most graphic of Southern war volumes, "A Rebel's Recollections," which had been warmly received.

Unfortunately, while at work in his cottage he was swindled out of all his savings by a scoundrelly publisher, and hurried to New York to seek editorial work again. He felt honored to be associated with Bryant; he liked the uncompromising dignity of the *Evening Post*. It was, he used to say, the completest realization of the ideal of the old *Pall Mall Gazette*—a newspaper con-

ducted by gentlemen, for gentlemen. His work consisted of assisting Bryant, Sidney Howard Gay, Parke Godwin, and Watson R. Sperry in writing editorials, and was congenial. Incidentally, he helped Bryant in his search for a literary editor. He wrote Thomas Bailey Aldrich, setting forth the dignity of the position, the attractive salary, and the pleasant nature of the work; all of which Aldrich acknowledged, replying: "But, my dear Eggleston, what can the paper offer to compensate one for having to live in New York?"

While affairs were in this posture, Bryant one day entered the *Post* library and began clambering about on a step-ladder, searching the shelves. Eggleston, from his little den opening off the larger room, saw him hunting, and suggested that he might be able to help find the information wanted. "I think not," answered Bryant in his curt, cold way, and then added, taking down still another volume: "I'm looking for a line that I ought to know where to find, but do not." Asking Bryant for the substance of the quotation, Eggleston was fortunately able to recognize it as a half-forgotten passage in Cowley. He seized the office copy of Cowley, turned to the page, and laid it open in Bryant's hand. The poet seemed surprised, and lost all interest in the quotation. "How," he demanded, "do you happen to know anything about Cowley?"

Eggleston explained that as a youth upon a Virginia plantation, seized by an overmastering thirst for literature, he had read the books in the libraries of all the old mansions in the county. Bryant settled himself interestedly in a chair of Eggleston's room. The young man's half-written editorial for the morrow lay unfinished on the desk, but Bryant never heeded it. For two hours he questioned Eggleston as a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in English is now questioned at his oral examination; inquiring as to his preferences, dislikes, and knowledge of books and authors, and making him defend his opinions. Then he abruptly said "Good afternoon."

Just before noon the next day the managing editor

entered Eggleston's room with an expression of mingled irritation and amusement. Mr. Bryant had just been in, he reported. "He walked into my office and said to me, 'Mr. Sperry, I have appointed Mr. Eggleston literary editor. Good morning, Mr. Sperry,' and walked out again."

Eggleston's literary editorship, which endured until the *Post* changed hands in 1881, was more energetic and fruitful than that of the half-invalid Thompson, partly because he had more money to spend. He was an ambitious, vigorous young man, who knew most of the chief literary figures of the time—Howells, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Stockton, and others met when he edited *Hearth and Home*. In this Indian summer of the old *Post*, before Carl Schurz and E. L. Godkin took it over, there was another outburst of poetry in its pages. It published Bryant's "Christmas in 1875" and his "Centennial Hymn, 1876"; Whittier's poem to the memory of Halleck a year later; and E. C. Stedman's "Hawthorne." Charles Follen Adams, author of the "Leedle Yawcob Strauss" poems, contributed repeatedly. It is interesting to find verse written by A. A. Adee while he was secretary of legation in Madrid; by William Roscoe Thayer; by Edgar Fawcett, the satirical novelist; by the late F. W. Gunsaulus, Chicago's most famous preacher; by Edward Eggleston and Agnes Repplier. There were also interesting prose contributions. E. P. Roe wrote upon—gardening! Benton J. Lossing sent some historical articles in his last years; and W. O. Stoddard, who had been Lincoln's secretary during the Civil War, contributed both prose and verse. Bret Harte for a time had a connection with the *Post*, which enabled him to appear regularly for his pay, though his writing was most irregular; his work is not identifiable.

The literary correspondence of the journal was greatly strengthened. Regular letters were sent from Boston by George Parsons Lathrop, Hawthorne's son-in-law, who during part of this period was assistant-editor of the *Atlantic*, and well known for his books. His report

(Feb. 27, 1878) of Emerson's long-awaited delivery of his lecture on "The Fortune of the Republic"—the sunlight streaming through a window of Old South upon the speaker's face, his manuscript placed on the flag draping the pulpit, a distinguished audience hanging on his words—was a fine bit of writing. Elie Reclus, the eminent French geographer, wrote upon French literature, as did Edward King, while there were Italian and London correspondents. From various American hands came gossip about rising literary men of the day, like the following vignette of a young lecturer named John Fiske:

> His vast learning is appalling to the ordinary man. . . . His mind is so clear that it is said he never copies his manuscript. He writes slowly—the right thought following its predecessor with unerring precision, the fit word dropping into its place; and with this enviable faculty of composition, of understanding thoroughly, and putting on paper just as he has in mind what he sees so clearly, he works right on, far into the night, scarcely feeling the need which most writers have of mental rest. He is so deliberate and to be relied on that once seeing the man, and knowing his diligence and habits of investigation and method of writing, you cannot entertain a doubt that he will accomplish whatever he sets himself to do. . . .
>
> He is of a very simple and sincere nature; and of Saxon complexion and hair. . . . He has a rosy face, auburn beard and hair—the latter in short, crisp curls—and brown eyes as round as marbles, which, seen through the glasses he always wears, seem to have just looked up from some absorbing study and to be scarcely yet ready to take in the common scenes of life. His is not a changeful countenance, but of the same calm, self-reliant expression on all occasions, as if he took the world philosophically and was always in good humor with it. He is solid, inclined to the sluggish in build and motion, and is slow of utterance, speaking in measured phrases with his teeth half shut.

But the standard of literary criticism was very little raised by Eggleston. Some light is thrown upon his aims by his rejoinder to a fellow Virginian, E. S. Nadal, who in the *Atlantic* in 1877 accused newspaper critics of yielding to pressure from the advertisers, and of refusing to

treat harshly writers they personally knew. Eggleston indignantly denied both allegations, remarking that he had reviewed "several thousands of good and bad books" without thought of advertising or personal friendship. He added that Nadal had mistaken the function of the newspaper literary critic. It could not be so elevated, analytic, and rigid as magazine reviewing. The newspaper writer's chief business was not to point out faults, but "to tell newspaper readers what books are published, and what sort of book each of them is, so that the reader may decide for himself what books to buy. His work is not so much criticism as description. It is in the nature of news and comment upon news, and the newspaper reviewer rightly omits much in the way of adverse criticism." Eggleston's successor proved how utterly fallacious was this statement.

In accordance with it, we find the great majority of volumes—travels like Burnaby's "Ride to Khiva," biographies like Mrs. Charles Kingsley's "Letters and Memorials" of her husband, histories like Symonds's "Renaissance in Italy"—merely scissored and summarized. Eggleston plumed himself upon being the first to give a thorough account, thought quite uncritical, of the most important books. Thus Elie Reclus in 1877 sent the *Post* a scoop upon Hugo's new "History of a Crime"; and a few months later it was delighted to give, in a column and a half, the first résumé of Schliemann's story of his discoveries at Mycenæ. Eggleston was alert to obtain advance sheets of new books, and the morning newspapers complained that the publishers made him a favorite. When Tennyson's "Harold" was issued late in 1876, there was no previous announcement, and a copy was sent all American and British literary editors precisely at noon. The *Evening Post* reviews for that day were already in the forms, and only an hour remained before the first edition went to press. But Eggleston resolved to anticipate the morning papers, enlisted Foreman Dithmar of the composing room, hurriedly prepared two columns of quotation and comment, and had them in type

ready for the front page within his time-limit. This exploit, in which it is hard to share his pride, reminds us of the story of Hugo's "Legend of the Ages" reaching the *Tribune* office just before Bayard Taylor left for the night, and of how Taylor within fifteen hours finished an "exhaustive" review, including translations of five poems.

Nevertheless, from time to time a genuinely critical bit of writing emerged in the *Post*. The reviews of Howells's "A Foregone Conclusion" in 1875 and of Henry James's "The American" in 1877, both appreciative, would do credit to any literary journal to-day. Parke Godwin wrote solid historical criticism. The paper was sufficiently discriminating to prefer the best of Constance Fenimore Woolson to the second-best of Bret Harte. Its worst misstep, shared by almost every other American journal, was its low estimate of "Tom Sawyer" in 1877. It thought the first half passable—"fairly entitled to rank with Mr. Aldrich's 'Story of a Bad Boy' "—but the second half poor, and it issued the grave warning: "Certainly it will be in the last degree unsafe to put the book into the hands of imitative youth."

The subject of international copyright had been reopened in 1867 by an article in the *Atlantic*, and the republication of Henry C. Carey's hostile essays; but a bill failed in Congress in 1868 and another in 1871. Bryant saw that the *Evening Post* kept up its campaign for a reform. Some publishers, led by Putnam's and J. R. Osgood & Co., were for a liberal law, but others, like Harper & Brothers, stood opposed; while the type-founders, paper-makers, and binders throughout the Union were hostile. Carey's school held that international copyright would produce a centralized monopoly of bookmaking, and included many booksellers of the Middle and Western States who complained that the bulk of English reprints were already monopolized by four or five Eastern firms. Carey also thought that the best way of giving an author his due would be simply to compel payment of a royalty to him. But the *Post* in 1877 took the view that the chief obstacle to international

copyright lay in the conviction of many manufacturers and farmers of the West that the patent system was uneconomic and injurious, and their inclination to regard copyright as a kind of patent.

From Eggleston we learn nearly as much of Bryant in his editorial capacity as from Bigelow and Parke Godwin. Bryant regarded anonymous criticism, he told Eggleston, "as a thing quite as despicable, unmanly, and cowardly as an anonymous letter." Eggleston's own notices were unsigned, but Bryant had given prominence to the fact that he was literary editor, sending every publisher an announcement, and it was the rule that contributed criticism should bear at least an initial. Once when Eggleston was about to publish an anonymous review by R. H. Stoddard, Bryant's indignant objections were with difficulty silenced. According to the literary editor, Bryant's printed index expurgatorius by no means included all the words to which he objected; he tried to rule out "numerous" for "many," "people" for "persons," "monthly" for "monthly magazine," and so on. He was accustomed to refer to Johnson's dictionary as an authority instead of later works. Eggleston recalls the vigor of Bryant's literary prejudices, one of them apparently evinced by his refusal to have the least share in the unveiling of the Poe monument in Baltimore.

Yet he lays emphasis upon Bryant's unwillingness to deal severely with fellow poets. The old editor said he had always found it possible to say something good about the writings of the poorest—to praise some line, some epithet, at least. Once Eggleston in despair showed him a volume of which it was impossible to commend a single word. Bryant admitted that it was idiotic; he admitted that even the cover was an affront to taste; but, he said, looking at it with an expression of total disgust, "You can commend the publishers for putting it on well." This was one expression of Bryant's innate gentleness. He was seriously distressed when some scribbler of verse on one occasion caught up a single commendatory phrase in Eggleston's unfavorable review, and asked Bryant to

allow him to use that phrase as an advertisement, with Bryant's own name attached. Eggleston answered the appeal, and did it forcibly. The poet would change his "day" at the office, or would work in the composing room, to avoid bores, but he never would be impolite to them. Once, indeed, a literary hack pestered him all morning in an effort to obtain the material for articles to publish upon Bryant when he died. Bryant came in obviously disturbed, and said to Eggleston in his mild way: "I tried to be patient, but I fear I was rude to him at the last. There seemed to be no other way of getting rid of him."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

WARFARE WITHIN THE OFFICE: PARKE GODWIN'S EDITORSHIP

SIX weeks before Bryant's death preparations were made, as with a prevision of that event, for the uninterrupted control of the newspaper by his family. A reorganization was forced, under circumstances later to be recounted, upon the business manager, Isaac Henderson. The poet assigned the presidency of the Evening Post Company to Judge John J. Monell, but kept the editorship; Henderson resigned as publisher and was succeeded by his son, Isaac, Jr.; and Parke Godwin became a trustee, resuming his connection as a writer on artistic, scientific, and literary topics. In June, 1878, immediately after the funeral of Bryant, Godwin, his son-in-law, took his place, and was formally named editor in December. His editorship, which endured but three years, affords an opportunity to pause for a survey of the men who made the *Evening Post* of the seventies, and of the figure believed by many to be trying to unmake it.

The newspaper establishment of which Godwin became head was one which, small and antiquated though it would seem now, had made extraordinary strides since the Civil War. During the conflict it had been housed in a dingy, rickety firetrap on the northwest corner of Liberty and Nassau Streets, where it had its publication office on the first floor, its five small editorial rooms together with the composing room on the third floor, and its presses in the basement. But in 1874-5 Henderson had erected a new and imposing building of ten stories on the corner of Fulton and Broadway, which the *Post* occupied until 1907. Here the composing rooms, unusually spacious and well-lighted, were on the top floor, the editorial rooms next below, and the offices on the ground floor.

It was necessary then to be near the postoffice to ensure the early delivery of mails, and there being no "tickers," evening papers had also to be near Wall Street. Stock quotations were long printed from the official sheet of the Stock Exchange. A messenger boy was kept waiting for the first copy of this publication, and it was hurried to the newspaper office, there cut into small "takes," and put into type with all possible speed. In the seventies and early eighties the *Post* was printed from a huge eight-cylinder press, direct from type which was locked upon the curved cylinders, while men standing in tiers upon each side fed in the paper. The last minutes before the press hour in the composing room, as the managing editor stood over the forms and decided what news should be killed, what used, and what held over, were highly exciting.

As for the staff, though still small, it had been steadily enlarged in the sixties and seventies. The first managing editor was Charles Nordhoff, who came in 1860, when the title was still an innovation, having recently been borrowed from the London *Times* by the *Tribune* to apply to Dana. For a generation it signified not a mere manager of the news columns, as it did later, but a man who in the absence of the editor performed all his functions. When Bryant was not in the office, and Godwin did not supply his place, Nordhoff was expected to take charge of the editorial page. The first literary editor, as we have seen, John R. Thompson, was employed in 1868; for a time he was expected also to review some plays, but within a few years the *Evening Post* had a special musical and dramatic editor in the person of William F. Williams, and by the middle seventies Williams was practically confining himself to music while J. Ranken Towse took over, to its vast improvement, the dramatic criticism. Thus there were three valuable employees doing work which had previously been ill-done or done not at all. As for the news force, when in 1871 William Alexander Linn accepted the position of city editor, he found it to consist, besides himself, of six men. These were the man-

aging editor, at this date Charlton Lewis; his assistant, Bronson Howard; the telegraph editor, financial editor, one salaried reporter, and one reporter "on space."

It would have been impossible to cover the news with this force had there not been a city news association which lent valuable assistance. Even then, in emergencies Linn had sometimes to call upon the bright young men of the composing room to accept assignments, and developed some good journalists in this way. The foreman of the composing room, Dithmar, was a German of rare culture, who with little early schooling had mastered five languages, and whom Bryant sometimes delighted in pitting against pretentious men of small attainments. Indeed, Bryant often discussed poetry, German philosophy, and journalistic problems with him in the most intimate fashion. He maintained an almost tyrannical discipline in his department, sometimes quarreled violently with the managing editor when the latter wanted copy set which would necessitate the killing of matter already in type, and even claimed the right to protest to the editors against their editorial views whenever the latter displeased him. Later he was appointed American consul at Breslau, Germany, and filled the position with credit. One of the compositors whom he recommended to Linn speedily made his mark as a political reporter, and was for more than twenty years the Washington correspondent of the *Times*.

The managing editors who succeeded Nordhoff after his resignation in 1871 were all men of distinction. Charlton Lewis, the first, was characterized by *Harper's Weekly* when he died as "a college graduate who knew Latin." As a matter of fact, his versatility, his ability to win distinction in many different fields, was remarkable. He became well known in classical circles by his prodigious labors in producing the Latin Dictionary published under his name, a revision and expansion of Freund's. He published translations from the German, and at the time of his death he was engaged in writing a commentary upon Dante. It is said that a professor

of astronomy, chatting with him for an hour upon the science, expressed astonishment later upon being told that Lewis was not an astronomer by profession; the mistake was natural, for Lewis—who had taught both the classics and mathematics at Union College—was really proficient in mathematical astronomy. His chief practical success was in the insurance field, where he became one of the greatest authorities upon both the legal and mathematical aspects of insurance; while he is now remembered principally for his almost life-long attention to the problems of charities and corrections. When managing editor of the *Post* in the early seventies, he induced E. C. Wines to write a series of articles upon prison reform in the various States. Later he became interested in the movement for probation and parole, and for years was president of both the National Prison Association and Prison Association of New York. He made an able managing editor, though he was not wholly liked or trusted by some members of the staff. Mr. Towse writes:

> He did not, as I remember, interfere much, if at all, with the general organization, confining himself mainly to the supervision of the editorial page, for which he wrote with his usual fluency, cogency, and eloquence. He produced copy with extraordinary rapidity and neatness, seldom making corrections of any kind. The natural alertness of his intellect was reinforced by an immense amount of varied and precise knowledge, and he impressed every one with a sense of his solid and brilliant competency.

Lewis was followed by Arthur G. Sedgwick, the brother-in-law of Charles Eliot Norton, a brilliant young writer whose promise had been early discerned by E. L. Godkin, and who had now been working for some years with Godkin in the office of the *Nation*. That fact alone would be a sufficient evidence of his ability and character. As W. C. Brownell wrote years later, Sedgwick's style was "the acme of well-bred simplicity, argumentative cogency, and as clear as a bell, because he simply never experienced mental confusion." The editorial page could not have been in better hands than his, but his connection

with the *Post* was—at this time—brief. The fourth managing editor was Sidney Howard Gay, who wrote an excellent short life of Madison for the American Statesmen Series, and whose name is linked with Bryant's by their nominal co-authorship of a four-volume history of the United States. As a matter of fact, Bryant supplied only the introduction and a little early advice, Gay deserving the whole credit for the work. It is badly proportioned, but in large part based upon original research, and readable in style. Gay was not merely an industrious historian, but a capable journalist, who had been trained on the *Tribune* in association with Greeley, Ripley, and Bayard Taylor.

The most notable of the other employees of the *Evening Post* in the seventies was Newton F. Whiting, the financial editor, who was followed and esteemed by the financial community as few journalists have ever been. It was far more difficult then than now to obtain a financial editor who could be trusted to abstain rigidly from dabbling in Wall Street and to hold the scales even between rival commercial interests. John Bigelow relates that in the fifties he once spoke of this difficulty at the Press Club to Dana. "Well," said Dana, "how could you expect to get a man in that department who wouldn't speculate?"—a rejoinder that Bigelow rightly thought a little shocking. But Whiting filled his position with an integrity that was not only absolute, but never even questioned; and with a quickness of intelligence, soundness of judgment, and scrupulous accuracy that made his death in the fall of 1882 a shock to down-town New York. Had he lived longer he would have become a figure of national prominence. The words of a memorial pamphlet issued in his honor were not a whit exaggerated:

> His ability to unravel a difficult situation in Wall Street was remarkable. In the event of a sudden crisis, the facts bearing on it were immediately ascertained and lucidly exposed; and the service thus rendered in the early editorials of the *Evening Post* has often proved the means of turning a morning of panic into an afternoon of confidence. His service in arresting the progress

of distrust on such occasions has perhaps never been fully estimated. The widespread feeling of regret in Wall Street on the news of his decease was in no small degree expressive of the loss of a helmsman in whom all had been accustomed to trust.

Becoming financial editor in 1868, it was he who condemned the Federal Government's interference in the "Black Friday" crisis, when its sudden sale of $4,000,000 in gold in New York city destroyed the plans of Jay Gould and James Fisk, jr., for cornering the gold market. Whiting's contention was that the importation of gold from Europe and other points would have crushed the corner anyway, and that it was not the Treasury's business to intervene in a battle between rival gangs of speculators, particularly since it had promised not to sell gold without due notice. He believed in hard money and wrote many of the *Post's* editorials against the greenback movement. Being totally opposed to the coinage of silver by the United States so long as other nations declined to cooperate in establishing the double standard upon a permanent basis, for years he daily placarded the depreciation of the standard silver dollar at the head of the *Post's* money column—a device that greatly irritated silver men. His rugged strength of character was well set off by a rugged body, for he was broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and an expert horseman, boxer, and wrestler. No man in the office was better liked.

The telegraph editor under Nordhoff was Augustus Maverick, known to all students of journalism by his volume on "Henry J. Raymond and the New York Press"; a good newspaper man, but a swaggering, egotistical fellow, whose Irish hot temper and tendency to domineer over others marked him for a stormy career. He was soon dismissed from the *Post* for insubordination, he made an unfortunate marriage, and his life had a tragic end. The musical editor, William F. Williams, was for some time also organist of St. George's Church. Those were the days of Mapleson and Italian opera, when a genuinely critical review would have been thought cruel, and Williams supplied the perfunctory and kindly

notices wanted by the managers; the distribution of tickets in return was always generous. He was a burly, genial fellow, a veritable Count Fosco in physical appearance, and with something of the indolence which accorded with his flesh. When he found that J. Ranken Towse was keenly interested in the theater, he gladly permitted Towse to represent him upon even highly important occasions; and thus was responsible for the beginnings of dramatic criticism of a high order in the *Post.*

From one point of view, Parke Godwin will be seen to have succeeded to editorial control of an influential organ, ably equipped and officered, and making from $50,000 to $75,000 a year for its owners. From another point of view, he succeeded to an irrepressible conflict, and the *Evening Post* was only the arena in which he was to fight to the bitter end with a wary, persistent, and experienced antagonist. The struggle was between the Bryant and Henderson families for possession of the *Post;* between the counting room and the editorial room for the dictation of its policy. It had covertly begun while Bryant was alive, and now became open.

Isaac Henderson by 1868 was in a well entrenched position. He had one-half of the stock of the newspaper, fifty or even fifty-one shares; he owned the building outright; his son, Isaac, jr., was in training to succeed him as publisher; and his son-in-law, Watson R. Sperry, an able and honorable young graduate of Yale, had become managing editor. It was becoming plain that Henderson wished to acquire unquestioned control, to install Sperry as editor, and make the *Evening Post* a family possession. What was the character of the man who thus seemed on the point of obtaining "Bryant's newspaper"?

It would be easy, from the evidence of his enemies, to take too harsh a view of Isaac Henderson. We must remember that standards of political and business morality were low after the Civil War. The fairest judgment is that Henderson was simply an average product of the days which, while they produced Peter Cooper, produced also Jim Fisk, Daniel Drew, and Jay Gould. His con-

stant thought was of dollars and cents. On Sundays he was a prominent member of a Brooklyn Methodist church; on weekdays he was intent upon driving the hardest bargain he legitimately could. He built up the *Evening Post* from a weak and struggling journal into a great property, which in one year of the war divided more than $200,000 in profits; from a $7 a week clerk he became a millionaire. His tastes were mercenary, and he had the sharpness of a Yankee horse-trader, but there is no conclusive evidence that he ever did what the business man of his time would have called a clearly dishonest act. When he undertook to acquire the site of his building, owned by the Old Dutch Church, he made an investigation, found that there was a two-inch strip fronting on Broadway that the church did not own, quietly obtained title to it, and—if we may believe the Evening *Telegram* of July 29, 1879—in the subsequent negotiations "profited by his discovery in the pleasant sum of $125,000, the largest price ever paid for a lot two inches wide." At the time many thought such an exploit creditable, and Henderson fitted his time.

Henderson faced his gravest charge when in January, 1864, he was dismissed from the office of Navy Agent in New York on the ground that he had accepted commissions upon contracts let for the government. Gideon Welles's Diary for the summer of 1864 contains many references to this affair. It states that on one occasion Welles discussed the matter with Lincoln, "who thereupon brought out a correspondence that had taken place between himself and W. C. Bryant. The latter averred that H. was innocent, and denounced Savage, the principal witness against him, because arrested and under bonds. To this the President replied that the character of Savage before his arrest was as good as Henderson's before he was arrested. He stated that he knew nothing of H.'s alleged malfeasance until brought to his notice by me, in a letter, already written, for his removal; that he inquired of me if I was satisfied he was guilty; that I said he was; and that he then directed, or said to me,

'Go ahead, let him be removed.' " It is a fact that Bryant never wavered in his faith in his partner. The charges had their origin in the malice of Thurlow Weed, who, angered by persistent attacks made upon him by the *Evening Post,* sought out the information which he believed to justify them, and laid them before Welles. In May, 1865, they came to a trial in the Federal Circuit Court under Judge Nelson. The prosecution brought forward a strong array of legal talent, while Henderson was represented by Judge Pierrepont and Wm. M. Evarts; the case against him utterly broke down, the judge said as much in his charge, and without leaving their seats the jury rendered a verdict of acquittal.

Circumstances, however, inclined many to regard the verdict as one of "Not Proved" only. It is important to note that Parke Godwin, then owner of one-third of the *Post,* stated in a letter to Bryant, July 31, 1865, his reasons for thinking the charges true:

I infer from a remark made by Mrs. Bryant, on Saturday evening, that she still has confidence in Mr. Henderson, and as I have not, I will tell you why. I will do so in writing, because I have found writing less liable to mistake or misconstruction than what is said by word of mouth.

I. My impressions are quite decided that Mr. H. has been guilty of the malpractices charged upon him by the government, for these reasons: (1) His own clerk (Mr. Blood) admitted the receipt of $70,000 as commissions, and that these were deposited by Mr. Henderson as his own, in his own bank; (2) the prosecuting attorneys, Mr. Noyes, Judge Bosworth, D. S. Dickinson, asserted that over $100,000, as they are able to prove positively, were paid into his office as commissions; Mr. Noyes told me that there could be no doubt of this; (3) other lawyers (Mr. Marbury, for instance) assure me that clients of theirs *know* of the habits of the office in this respect, and would testify if legally called upon; (4) his private bank account shows very large transactions, which are said to correspond singularly with the entries in the books of the contractors implicated with him.

II. Supposing him not guilty, the efforts he made and was willing to make to screen himself from prosecution, were to say the least singular; but they were more than that; they were of a

kind no upright citizen could resort to or sanction. He tried to tamper with the Grand Jury, he tried to buy up the District Attorney, he "secured," as D. D. told me, the petit jury, and he was negotiating, at the time the trial came on, to purchase Fox. These are things difficult to reconcile with any supposition of the man's integrity or honor.

III. Admitting him, however, to be wholly innocent, his position before the public has become such that it is a source of the most serious mortification and embarrassment to the conductors of the *Evening Post*. We cannot brand a defaulter, condemn peculation, urge official economy, or get into any sort of controversy with other journals, without having the charges against Henderson, which nine tenths of the public believe to be true, flung in our faces. Not once, but two dozen times, I have been shut up by a rejoinder of this sort. Mr. Nordhoff has felt this, in his private intercourse as well as in a public way, to such an extent that he has told me peremptorily and positively that he would not continue in the paper if Mr. Henderson retained an active part in connection with it. Now, it seems to me that if there were any feeling of delicacy in Mr. Henderson, any regard for the sensitiveness of others, any care for the reputation and independence of the paper, he would be willing to relieve us of this most injurious and unpleasant predicament.

IV. I will add, that I am not satisfied with his management of our business affairs; he gives them very little of his attention, though he pretends to do so; he is largely and constantly engaged in outside speculations, in grain, provisions, etc.; and in one instance, as our books show, he has given himself a fictitious credit of $7,000, which was irregular. . . .

Whether commissions were actually taken none can now say; the essential fact is that the man who was to be editor of the *Post* had thus early made up his mind to distrust and detest the tall, florid publisher of the paper. Godwin actually proposed to Henderson at this date that the latter sell out to William Dorsheimer, a well-known lawyer, later lieutenant-governor, who was willing to buy, but Henderson naturally refused to leave under fire. Godwin ultimately consented to stay with the *Post* until Bryant had refreshed himself from his Civil War labors by a European trip; but in 1868 he sold his third share to Bryant and Henderson for $200,000, and gladly

left the office for the time being. Nordhoff remained longer, but with unabated dislike for Henderson, and at the crisis of the Tweed fight, as we have seen, thought it necessary to resign. Most of the editorial employees of the *Post* disliked the publisher. He practiced a penny-pinching economy. The building superintendent was required to send up a daily statement of the coal used. Ill-paid workers, coming into his office to ask for more wages, would state their case and then note that his eyes were fixed suggestively upon the maxim, one of many framed on the walls, "Learn to Labor and to Wait." But Bryant seems never to have lost his confidence in him. Every one agrees that one of Henderson's best traits was an almost boyish admiration and deference for Bryant, and that he would never do anything to offend the poet.

By the middle seventies the Civil War charges against Henderson were largely forgotten. The danger to be apprehended from his activities and ambition was not that the *Evening Post* would be brought under dishonest management, but simply that it would be brought under a management which thought first and always of money-making, steered its course for the greatest patronage, and shrank from such self-sacrificing independence as the paper had displayed in the Bank war or the early stages of the slavery struggle. Henderson never thought of it as a sternly impartial guide of public opinion; he thought of it as a producer of revenue. His whole later record as a publisher, as Bryant aged, shows this.

The seventies were the hey-day of the "reading notice," and in printing veiled advertisements the *Post* only followed nearly all other newspapers. Washington Gladden left the *Independent,* the leading religious weekly of the day, recently edited by Beecher and Tilton, in 1871, because no fewer than three departments—an Insurance Department, a Financial Department, and a department of "Publishers' Notices"—were so edited and printed that, though pure advertising at $1 a line, they appeared to a majority of readers as editorial matter. These advertising items were frequently quoted in other journals

as utterances of the *Independent*. The *Times* as late as 1886 was placed in an embarrassing position by divulgence of the fact that it had received $1,200 from the Bell Telephone Company for publishing an advertisement which many readers would take to be an editorial. No "reading notices" ever appeared in the editorial columns of the *Post*, and Whiting would instantly have resigned had an effort been made to place one in the financial columns; but they were discreditably frequent in the news pages. Occasionally a string of them would emerge under the heading, "Shopping Notes"; at Christmas they were prominently displayed on the front page as "Holiday Notices"; and sometimes the unwary reader would commence what looked like a poem and find it ending:

> Ye who with languor droop and fade,
> Or ye whom fiercer illness thrills;
> Call the blest compound to your aid—
> Trust to Brandreth's precious pills.

But where the influence of the business office was seen in its most pernicious form was in efforts to muzzle the treatment of the news and to color editorial opinion. W. G. Boggs, now a tall, thin, white-haired old man, was the advertising manager, with a wide and intimate acquaintance among commercial men and politicians, and with an endless succession of axes to grind. "He was the most familiar representative of the publication in the editorial rooms," says Mr. Towse, "and manifested a special interest in the suppression of any paragraph, or allusion, that might offend the dispensers of political advertising, which in those days was an important source of revenue." Tammany gave much printing to the *Post's* job office until 1871. Henderson himself almost never interfered—Mr. Sperry recalls only one harmless instance during his managing editorship. But in 1872 a dramatic incident lit up the situation as by a bolt of lightning. Arthur G. Sedgwick had just become managing editor, giving the editorial page new strength. At this time there was much talk of maladministration and

graft in the Parks Department. One day Sedgwick, chatting with J. Ranken Towse upon the subject, remarked that although the rascality was clear, there appeared no indication in it of connivance by the Commissioner, Van Nort. Towse dissented, saying that the man was hand in glove with Tammany, and must be fully cognizant of all that was going on. He suggested that Van Nort had escaped suspicion because he was a social favorite, superior in manners and culture to most politicians, and because he had used his advertising patronage in a manner to please all New York papers. To enforce his argument, he directed Sedgwick's attention to a number of highly suspicious transactions. Sedgwick, he states:

saw the points promptly, and bade me write an editorial paragraph embodying them and demanding explanations. I told him it would be as much as my place was worth to write such an article. He replied, somewhat hotly, that he, not I, was responsible for the editorial page, and peremptorily told me to write as he had directed. So I furnished the paragraph, which, to the best of my recollection, was largely an enumeration of undeniable facts for which Van Nort, as the head of his department, was officially responsible, and which he ought to be ready to explain. It was put into type and printed as an editorial in the first edition. The paper was scarcely off the press when the expected storm broke. Mr. Henderson, ordinarily cold and self-restrained, passed hurriedly through my room in a state of manifest excitement, with an early copy of the edition in his hand. Entering the adjoining room of Mr. Sedgwick, he denounced my unlucky article, and demanded its instant suppression. A brief but heated altercation followed; Henderson insisting that the article was scandalous and libelous, and must be withdrawn, and Sedgwick asserting his sole authority in the matter and declaring that, so long as he was managing editor, the article would remain as it stood. Finally Henderson withdrew, but meanwhile the press had been stopped, and the objectionable paragraph removed from the form. Before the afternoon was over Sedgwick handed in his resignation and returned to the service of the *Nation*.

As Mr. Towse adds, probably Bryant, now too old to be much in the office, never knew the precise truth of this affair; and if he did, may have thought that his inter-

ference would be bootless, and would only intensify the irritation of the episode. But we can see why men jocularly called Henderson "the wicked partner," and the *Post* a Spenlow and Jorkins establishment.

Parke Godwin maintained his attitude of constant suspicion toward the paper's publisher. Two years after the sale of his third share of the *Post,* he obtained evidence which convinced him, as he wrote Bryant, that he had been overreached by Henderson "to the extent of one hundred thousand dollars at least." His efforts to institute an inquiry came to nothing, and he ended them by sending the poet a solemn note of warning: "I regard Mr. Henderson as a far-seeing and adroit rogue; his design from the beginning has been and still is to get exclusive possession of the *Evening Post,* at much less than its real value, which I expected to prove was much more nearly a million than half a million dollars" (July, 1870). Early in the seventies he took charge of the *Post* for various short periods, and what he then observed increased his apprehensions, or, as Henderson's defenders would say, his prejudices. At the beginning of 1878 he prevailed upon Bryant to have an investigation of the newspaper's finances made by Judge Monell, and the result was the reorganization already chronicled.

In brief, Judge Monell's inquiries showed that very large sums were owed to Bryant by Henderson, and that for a long period Henderson's private financial affairs, which had been subjected to a severe strain by his erection of the new building, had not been properly separated from those of the *Evening Post.* Had it not been for these disclosures, the astute business manager would undoubtedly have been able to step forward soon after Bryant's death and take control. But he could not immediately meet his debts to the Bryant family, and was forced to consent to an arrangement which wrecked whatever plans in that direction he may have laid. Henderson owned fifty shares, Bryant forty-eight, Julia Bryant one, and Judge Monell one. Under the new arrangement Henderson pledged thirty of his shares to Bryant as se-

curity for his debts, and twenty to Parke Godwin, who reëntered the company, while Bryant also pledged twenty shares to Godwin. The Board of Trustees was so constituted that the position of the Bryant family was made secure. Henderson intended to move heaven and earth to redeem his shares; but, wrote Judge Monell in an opinion for the family, even if he did that "he cannot change the direction nor regain control. This can only be done by persons holding a majority of the stock."

Godwin when made editor was regarded as one of the ablest and most experienced journalists in New York. Far behind him were the youthful, enthusiastic days of the forties, when he had been an ardent apostle of Fourierism, had applauded the Brook Farm experiment, helping edit the organ of that community, the *Harbinger,* and had advised his friend Charles A. Dana that it was possible for a young journalist to cultivate high thinking and high ambitions in New York on $1,000 a year. He had worked like a Trojan then on the *Post,* and had made several unsuccessful ventures into the magazine field. Far behind him were the pinched years of the fifties when, having temporarily left the *Post,* he was associate editor of the struggling *Putnam's Magazine,* and gave it national reputation by his vigorous assaults upon the slavery forces and President Pierce. It was with a touch of bitterness that he had complained in 1860, when he rejoined the *Evening Post,* that the latter had never paid him more than $50 a week. But, purchasing Bigelow's share of the paper at a bargain, its Civil War profits made him rich.

The editorial writing done by Godwin had not the eloquence or finish of Bryant's, but it showed an equal grasp of political principles, and a better understanding of economic problems. He was a real scholar, the author of many books, able to appeal to cultivated audiences. His legal, literary, and historical studies gave him a distinct advantage over the ordinary journalist of the time, not college bred and too busy for wide reading. Young Henry Watterson justly wrote of him in 1871, when he had temporarily left his profession again:

It is a thousand pities that a man of Parke Godwin's strength of mind and strength of principle is by any chance or cause cut off from his proper sphere of usefulness and power, the press of New York. He has a clearer head and less gush than Greeley, and he is hardly any lazier than Manton Marble, though older; he writes with as much dash and point as Hurlburt, and his knowledge of the practice of journalism is not inferior to that of Greeley and Nordhoff. No leading writer of the day makes more impression on the public mind than he could make, and in losing him along with Hudson the journals of the great metropolis are real and not apparent sufferers. Godwin is eminently a leader-writer, and whenever he goes to work on a newspaper the addition is sure to be felt forthwith.

Unfortunately, he was now sixty-two, and well beyond his prime, while the defect of which Watterson speaks, his laziness, had grown upon him. In the past he had been noted for his editorial aggressiveness, and the most "radical" of the *Post's* utterances in the Civil War are attributable to him. It was once said that, in the *Evening Post* office in the seventies, "he was a lion in a den of Daniels." George Cary Eggleston, who worked with him when he was editor 1878-1881, tells us that "he knew how to say strong things in a strong way. He could wield the rapier of subtle sarcasm, and the bludgeon of denunciation with an equally skilful hand. Sometimes he brought even a trip-hammer into play with startling effect." Eggleston cites an incident which happened during Sarah Bernhardt's first visit to New York in 1880. A sensational clergyman, who always denounced the theater as the gateway of hell, sent the *Evening Post* a vehement protest against the space it was giving Mme. Bernhardt, whom he characterized as a woman of immoral character and dissolute conduct. This letter he headed, "Quite Enough of Sara Bernhardt." Godwin was enraged. He instantly penned an editorial answer, which he entitled "Quite Enough of Blank"—Blank being the clergyman's name, used in full. Pointing out that Mme. Bernhardt had asked for American attention solely as an artist, that the *Post* had treated her only in that light, and

that the charge that she was immoral was totally without supporting evidence anyway, he demolished the luckless cleric. But Eggleston deplores "a certain constitutional indolence" of Godwin's as depriving the world of the fruits of his ripest powers, and this fault was now evident. He went much into society, he sometimes wrote his editorials in bed in the morning and sent them down by messenger, and sometimes a promised editorial did not appear.

Upon all the public issues which had importance during Godwin's editorship the position of the *Post* had already been well fixed. It had been an advocate of civil service reform early in the sixties, at a time when even well-informed men, like Henry Adams in a conversation with E. L. Godkin, spoke of it only as "something Prussian." It had urged an early resumption of specie payments, had bitterly opposed the Bland Act of 1878 for the coinage of two to four million dollars' worth of silver monthly, saying that it was "a public disgrace," and had resisted the greenback party. It was deeply suspicious of pensions legislation, and had applauded Grant's veto of the bounty bill. It had early decided that Blaine was "one of our superfluous statesmen," and that the sooner he was discarded, the better. It had said in 1875 that the Granger movement promised to leave behind it a valuable legacy of general railway legislation "which, tested by practice, will afford us a foundation for our future legislation on questions of transportation." Year in and year out it asked for a lower tariff—a tariff for revenue only—and attacked all other forms of subsidy for private enterprises. Godwin had no momentous decisions to make.

It was by no means a foregone conclusion in 1880 that the *Post* would support the Republican ticket, for in advance of the Republican Convention it showed itself equally hostile to Grant (whom the *Times* was advocating) and to Blaine (the *Tribune's* favorite). But as soon as word came of Garfield's nomination, it hailed it as "a grand result," and "a glorious escape from Grant

and Blaine." Of Gen. Hancock, the Democratic nominee, the *Post* remarked that his only recommendation was his military record, and that his party proposed to fill the Presidential chair with the uniform of a major-general, a sword, and a pair of spurs.

During the final months of 1879, and throughout 1880, Godwin and Henderson met and spoke to each other with grave, cold courtesy. They even consulted with each other. But beneath the surface their mutual hostility never slackened, and their associates knew they were at daggers drawn. The crisis could not long be delayed.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE VILLARD PURCHASE: CARL SCHURZ EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WITHIN three years after Bryant's death his newspaper, still prosperous and well-edited, was suddenly sold, and placed in the hands of the ablest triumvirate ever enlisted by an American daily. The transfer was announced in the issue of May 25, 1881:

> The *Evening Post* has passed under the control of Mr. Carl Schurz, Mr. Horace White, and Mr. E. L. Godkin, who yesterday completed the purchase of a large majority of its stock. To-morrow Mr. Schurz will assume the editorial direction of the journal.

It was generally known that the real buyer was Henry Villard, but for several weeks this fact was not only concealed, but for some reason was explicitly denied both by the *Post* and Mr. Villard. On July 1 there appeared a supplementary announcement:

> Beginning with the next number the *Nation* will be issued as the weekly edition of the New York *Evening Post*.
>
> It will retain the name and have the same editorial management as heretofore, and an increased staff of contributors, but its contents will in the main have already appeared in the *Evening Post*.
>
> This consolidation will considerably enlarge the field and raise the character of the *Evening Post's* literary criticism and news. It will also add to its staff of literary contributors the very remarkable list of writers in every department with which readers of the *Nation* have long been familiar.

To few interested in the *Post* could its sale have been a surprise. It is true that Parke Godwin had many reasons, sentimental and practical, for continuing his editorship and maintaining the Bryant family's half-ownership. He appreciated the argument which John Bigelow addressed to him when he talked of giving both up. "Bethink you,"

wrote Bigelow, "that now and for the first time in your long career of journalism you have absolute control of a paper of traditional respectability and authority, in which you can say just what you please on all subjects." His two sons seemed interested in making journalism their career. He had an able staff, several of whom—as the financial editor Whiting, the literary editor Eggleston, and the dramatic editor Towse—were unexcelled in their departments, while two valuable additions, Robert Burch and Robert Bridges (later editor of *Scribner's*) had been made to the news room. But Parke Godwin was sixty-five this year. He had undertaken the writing of Bryant's life in two volumes, and the editing of the poet's works in four more, while he wished to complete his history of France, begun before the war. He believed that it would be well for his family, after his death, to have its money invested in a less precarious enterprise than a newspaper. Above all, his relations with Isaac Henderson had now come to a breaking point.

An open quarrel between them in the spring of 1881 ended in a clear assertion by Godwin of his right to control the editorial policy. He thought for the moment of bringing Edward H. Clement, a young Boston journalist, later well known for his editorship and regeneration of the *Transcript,* to be his associate. But at this juncture he accidentally discovered that Henderson was negotiating for the sale of his half of the *Evening Post* to some prominent capitalist, and leaped to the conclusion that the man was Jay Gould. In this he was doubtless mistaken. But he was deeply alarmed by the thought that the Bryant family might be associated with a notorious gambler and manipulator, whose object would have been to make the *Post* a disreputable organ of his schemes.

Almost simultaneously he learned from Carl Schurz, then in the last months of his service as Secretary of the Interior, that he, Horace White, and Henry Villard were searching for a daily, into which they were prepared to put a considerable amount of capital, and that they were negotiating with the owners of the *Commercial Adver-*

tiser, but would prefer the *Evening Post.* Godwin, given a month to consider, consulted his most judicious friends —Samuel J. Tilden, Joseph H. Choate, President Garfield, and others—who all advised him to dispose of the paper. Choate told him that Henderson had come to his office for legal advice as to the possibility of somehow destroying Godwin's control. With great reluctance, the Bryant heirs concluded to sell. The paper was then earning $50,000 a year, and Horace White finally agreed to the payment of $450,000 for the family's half, which carried control of the board of trustees. For a time Henderson was disinclined to sell the other half, but with the aid of Godwin, to whom Henderson was still in debt, he was soon brought to yield.

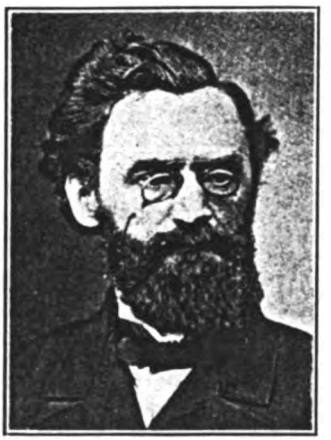
How did Henry Villard come to purchase the *Evening Post?* He was at this time midway in his amazing career as a railway builder. Eight years before, when known only as a young German-American who had proved himself one of the ablest and most daring of the Civil War correspondents, he had become the American representative of a Protective Committee of German bondholders at Frankfort. This body, and a similar one which he soon joined, had large holdings in Western railways, which Villard had been asked to supervise. Thus launched into finance, by his ability, energy, and determination he had soon made a large fortune. His first extensive undertakings were in the Pacific Northwest, where another son of the Palatinate, John Jacob Astor, had carved out a career before him; and his success with the Oregon & California Railroad, and Oregon Railway & Navigation Company emboldened him in 1881-83 to undertake and carry through the completion of the Northern Pacific. His interest in his original profession, and a wish to devote his money to some large public end, led him while busiest with this great undertaking to conceive the plan of buying a metropolitan paper and giving it the ablest editors procurable.

Horace White, who was connected in New York with Mr. Villard's business enterprises, and was ready to re-

PARKE GODWIN
Editor-in-Chief 1878-1881.

HENRY VILLARD,
Owner 1881-1900.

HORACE WHITE,
Associate Editor 1881-1899,
Editor-in-Chief 1900-1903.



CARL SCHURZ,
Editor-in-Chief 1881-1883

enter journalism, undoubtedly shared in this conception. When Godwin's half of the *Post* had been purchased, and Schurz had consented to become editor-in-chief, E. L. Godkin was approached with the offer of an editorship and a share of the stock. He wisely refused to consider the proposal till Henderson's withdrawal was assured, and then accepted it, writing Charles Eliot Norton that he did so because he was weary of the unintermittent work involved in the conduct of the *Nation,* because he knew that, being forty-nine, his vivacity and energy must decline, and the value of the *Nation* suffer proportionately, and because he wished to make more money during the few working years left to him. The *Nation,* in fact, was a struggling publication. It was bought by the proprietors of the *Evening Post,* its price was reduced to $3 a year, and Wendell Phillips Garrison, its literary editor, who was Villard's brother-in-law, went with it to the *Evening Post* to take charge of its weekly issuance.

The new owner and three new editors had long regarded the *Evening Post* with high respect. Villard in 1857 had applied at its office for work, being out of employment and almost penniless; and upon his offering to go to India to report the Sepoy Mutiny, Bigelow had offered him $20 for every letter he wrote from that country. His political ideas had been identical with the *Post's*—for example, he had been a Liberal Republican in 1872, but had refused to follow Greeley. Godkin had contributed to the *Evening Post* in the fifties upon such topics as the death of the old East India Company, and we have seen that he furnished correspondence from Paris in 1862. Like his friend Norton, he had long acknowledged the paper's peculiar elevation. Horace White had contributed in the late seventies upon the silver question. Schurz had known it as a loyal ally in his efforts for a civil service law, sound money, and reform within the Republican party, while it is interesting to note that under Bryant it had said that he was the strongest man in the Senate.

Each of the three editors had his own title to distinc-

tion, and each had won his special public following. Carl Schurz had been constantly in the public eye since he lent valuable assistance to Lincoln in the campaign of 1860. The German-Americans, indeed, had known of him much earlier, for as a youth in Germany, aflame with revolutionary zeal, his military services in the uprising of 1848, and his subsequent romantic rescue of Gottfried Kinkel from the fortress at Spandau, had made him famous. In 1858, writing Kinkel from Milwaukee, he wondered a little over his steady rise in reputation, modestly explaining it as due to American curiosity in "a German who, as they declare, speaks English better than they do, and also has the advantage over their native politicians of possessing a passable knowledge of European conditions." It was, of course, really due to appreciation of his eloquence, versatility, mental power, and enthusiasm for liberal principles. He has admitted that he was inexpressibly gratified by the salvos of applause with which he was greeted in the Chicago Convention of 1860. For his platform advocacy of Lincoln he was rewarded with the post of Minister to Spain, which he early resigned to buckle on his sword. Then came his sterling service first as a brigadier-general and later as major-general, when he fought at Chancellorsville, Chattanooga, and Gettysburg. His investigative trip through the South in 1865 for President Johnson, and refusal to suppress his report because it did not support Johnson's views, drew national attention to his aggressive independence. Six years in the Senate, where he was unrivaled for his discussions of finance, and four years as Secretary of the Interior, had added to his fame as a man of broad views, high motives, and unshakable courage. By 1881 he was recognized as, next to Hamilton and Gallatin, our greatest foreign-born statesman.

Godkin also had a national following—a following of intellectual liberals, especially strong in university and professional circles, marshaled by the *Nation* since he founded it in 1865. He had, as Lowell said, made himself "a Power." In the ability with which the weekly

discussed politics and social questions, the trenchancy of its style, and the soundness of its literary criticism, it was unapproached by anything else in American—James Bryce thought also in British—journalism. The masses who knew Schurz well had hardly heard of it; but no man of cultivation who tried to keep abreast of the times neglected it, and because it was digested by newspaper editors all over the Union, Godkin's influence was deep and wide. James Ford Rhodes gives an illustration of this influence just after the *Nation* became practically the weekly *Evening Post*. "Passing a part of the winter of 1886 in a hotel at Thomasville, Ga., it chanced that among the hundred or more guests there were eight or ten of us who regularly received the *Nation* by post. Ordinarily it arrived in the Friday noon train from Savannah, and when we came from our midday dinner into the hotel office, there, in our respective boxes, easily seen, and from their peculiar form recognized by every one, were our copies of the *Nation*. Occasionally the papers missed connections at Savannah, and our *Nations* did not arrive till after supper. It used to be said by certain scoffers that if a discussion of political questions came up in the afternoon of one of those days of disappointment, we readers were mum; but in the late evening, after having digested our political pabulum, we were ready to join issue with any antagonist."

As for Horace White, he was best known in the Middle West, where he had entered journalism in 1854 as a reporter for the Chicago *Daily Journal*. Four years later, after much activity in behalf of the free soil movement in Kansas, during which he even removed to the Territory himself and went through the preliminary form of taking up a claim, he reported the Lincoln-Douglas debates for the Chicago *Press and Tribune*. His reminiscences of those weeks of intimate contact with Lincoln fill many pages of Herndon's life of the President, and constitute one of its most interesting chapters. During the war he was Washington correspondent of the Chicago *Tribune*, secretary for a time to Stanton, and organizer with A. S.

Hill and Henry Villard of a news agency in competition with the Associated Press. After it, for nearly a decade, he was editor and one of the principal proprietors of the *Tribune,* which under him was far more liberal than it has ever been since. But he was valuable to the *Evening Post* chiefly because he had devoted himself for years to study of the theory of banking and finance, on which his articles and pamphlets had already made him a recognized authority.

It was thus an editorship of "all the talents" that was installed in the *Evening Post* just before Garfield was shot. Schurz was specially equipped to discuss politics, the range of problems he had met while Secretary of the Interior, and German affairs; White was perhaps the best writer available on the tariff, railways, silver question, and banking; while Godkin held an unrivaled pen for general social and political topics. By birth they were German, American, and British, but Schurz and Godkin were really cosmopolites, citizens of the world. Their practical experience had covered a surprising range. We are likely to forget, for example, that Schurz had once made a living by teaching German in London, and had farmed in Wisconsin, while Godkin had been a war correspondent in the Crimea, and admitted to the New York bar. In their fundamental idealism the three men were wholly alike. Schurz's political record and Godkin's *Nation* were monuments to it. They were one in wishing to make the *Post* the champion of sound money, a low tariff, civil service reform, clean and independent politics, and international peace. Henry Villard with rare generosity assumed financial responsibility for the paper, but made the editors wholly independent by placing it in the hands of three trustees—Ex-Gov. Bristow, Ex-Commissioner David A. Wells, and Horace White.

II

The selection of Schurz to be editor-in-chief was more than a tribute to his station as a public man. Of the three, he had the most varied journalistic experience. As

a young man in Germany he had helped Kinkel edit the *Bonner Zeitung.* After the Civil War he became head of the Washington Bureau of the New York *Tribune,* and took an instant liking both to journalism and the men engaged in it—in his reminiscences he draws a sharp contrast between their high principles and the low sense of honor among Washington officeholders. He soon accepted the editorship of the Detroit *Post,* a new journal, urged upon him by Senator Zechariah Chandler, and in 1867 became editor and part owner of the St. Louis *Westliche Post,* a place desirable because it brought him into association with Dr. Emil Preetorius and other German-Americans of congenial views. When the date of his leaving the Secretaryship of the Interior approached in 1881, he had received several offers of editorial positions. Rudolph Blankenburg, later Mayor of Philadelphia, wrote that there was crying need of a good daily in that city, and that he and other business men would found one if Schurz would take charge. The statement was published in St. Louis that a new daily was about to be established there under Schurz. But Schurz himself would have been the last to lay emphasis upon his mere practical experience—he had no taste for financial or news management, and it appears that neither the Detroit *Post* nor *Westliche Post* was financially prosperous under him. His qualifications for the chief editorship were of a different and much rarer kind.

His ability as a writer shows a mingling of high merits with a few distinct shortcomings. Since his "Reminiscences" will live as long as any work of its kind and time, no less for its style than its fascinating story, since his essay on Lincoln is an admitted classic, it is unnecessary to say that he was a master of the pen. He has interestingly related how he taught himself to write English on first coming to America. At the start he made it a practice to read his daily newspaper from beginning to end; then he proceeded to English novels—"The Vicar of Wakefield," Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray; and he followed them with Macaulay's essays and Blackstone's

commentaries, particularly admiring the terse, clear style of the latter. Finally he read Shakespeare's plays, going through their enormous vocabulary with the utmost conscientiousness. At the same time he practiced turning the Letters of Junius, which he thought brilliant, into German, and back again into English. The result was that soon he not merely wrote, but thought equally well in English or German, and much preferred English for certain purposes, as public speaking and political discussion. Schurz's speeches were among the most eloquent delivered in his generation. One of the oldest Senators said that his address of February, 1872, was the best he had ever heard in the upper chamber; his Brooklyn speech of 1884 against Blaine ranks with the greatest of American campaign orations; and his utterances upon tariff and civil service reform were read by millions.

Yet Schurz fell just short of being a great editorial writer. He used a battle-axe, at once sharp and crushing, but he could not vary it with the play of the rapier, as E. L. Godkin could. His directness, clarity, and force were marked, but his writings were lacking in humor, metaphor, and allusion. Devoting himself to large political questions, he had no time to observe interesting minor social phenomena, so that his work lacked relief. No one could excel him in argument or exposition upon subjects with which he was familiar, but he could not relieve his discussions from a reproach of dryness.

Of the mind and character behind the pen, almost nothing can be said except in praise. All his life he had been a zealot for liberalism. He had thrown himself into the revolutionary movement of '48 with an ardor not a whit boyish, on coming to America he had instantly enlisted against slavery, and he was still an enthusiast for reform. Grover Cleveland once spoke of his career as teaching "the lesson of moral courage, of intelligent and conscientious patriotism, of independent political thought, of unselfish political affiliation, and of constant political vigilance." He was for sound money from greenback days to the settlement of the free silver issue;

he was a combatant against "imperialism" from Grant's attempted annexation of Domingo to Roosevelt's seizure of Panama. When Secretary of the Interior he enforced the merit system, yet unembodied in any law, in his department, requiring competitive examinations for clerkships. His one fault was that in his intentness on his own subject he sometimes lost perspective, and became indifferent to equally important aims of others.

It has been said that as Lord Halifax made the term "trimmer" honorable in England, Schurz made that of party turncoat honorable in America. His obedience to principle was so unswerving that he was heedless of allegiance to groups or individuals. He was for Seward in 1860, but fell in instantly behind Lincoln; supported President Johnson's reconstruction policy till his trip South in 1865, and then followed Sumner; was for Grant in 1869, and one of the earliest leaders against him in 1870-71; warmly commended some of Roosevelt's acts and condemned more; was one of Bryan's sternest opponents in 1896, and made a speaking tour for him in 1900. The independence exhibited in this adherence to conviction was in the highest degree creditable. His sense of personal rectitude was so keen and sensitive that he could not bear to do anything for mere "expediency." It can only be said that he was sometimes a little too positive that he was right, a little intolerant of others. His indignation when Roosevelt and Lodge in 1884 followed Blaine, whom they suspected of being dishonest, would have been less intense had he seen that there is really something to be said for party regularity under such circumstances.

Yet he was no impracticable idealist, but a man with a shrewd grasp of affairs. Mark Twain declared that he made it a rule, when in doubt in politics, to follow Schurz, saying to himself, "He's as safe as Ben Thornburgh"—a famous Mississippi pilot. When his collected papers were published, they showed that throughout his long life he had possessed remarkable prescience. He wrote Kinkel in 1856 that Buchanan's Administration

would end the old Democratic party, that the contest with slavery would not be settled without powder, and that the North would win. In 1858 he predicted that there would be a war, and that he would fight in it. In 1864 he ventured to assert, before the election, that "In fifty years, perhaps much sooner, Lincoln's name will be inscribed close to Washington's on this American republic's roll of honor. And there it will remain for all time." No one saw farther into the reconstruction question than he. Much of what we now call conservation, especially of forests, dates from Schurz's far-sighted pioneer work as Secretary of the Interior.

Humor is almost indispensable to an editor, and Schurz had little of it, but in compensation he was sustained by a better trait. Every one perceived the gallant quality of the man, but his intimates alone understood what a deep poetic vein fed it. Howells says that at first he was a little awed by the revolutionist, general, statesman, and editor. "But underneath them all, and in his heart of hearts, I was always divining him poet. He had lived one of the greatest and most beautiful romances, and you could not be in his presence without knowing it, unless you were particularly blind and deaf. It kindled in his eyes; it trembled in his clear, keen, yet gentle voice; it shone in his smile; it sounded in his laugh, which his youth never died out of." No more unselfish man ever moved actively in American affairs. A sentence from a letter to Kinkel strikes the keynote to his life: "To have aims that lie outside ourselves and our immediate circle is a great thing, and well worth the sacrifice."

Schurz, Godkin, and White made only two important changes in the form of the *Post*, both dictated by its union with the *Nation*. It was still, like the *Sun* of that time, like several great Paris dailies to-day, a four-page sheet; except that on Saturday Parke Godwin had instituted a two-page supplement, containing book notices, essays, fictional sketches, and other miscellaneous matter. This was now utilized for the book reviews written by the *Nation's* unrivaled staff of contributors—Lowell, Bryce,

Parkman, W. C. Brownell, Henry Adams, John Fiske, Charles Eliot Norton, and a long list of experts in every field. The space thus afforded was inadequate, and it became necessary to print many reviews during the week opposite the editorials, so that the *Post* acquired a much more literary flavor. Under Bryant and Godwin editorials had been variable in length, and nearly all headed. Now they were standardized into two forms; long headed articles, of 800 to 1,200 words each, of which two or three were printed daily, and seven to ten paragraphs of 100-250 words each, without captions. The brevier type was sometimes lifted direct into the forms of the *Nation*.

In the office Schurz was called "the General." His subordinates found him genial, kindly, and appreciative, though his manner had a touch of military strictness. He left the news, financial, literary, and dramatic departments almost wholly to their various heads, but bent a watchful eye upon the musical criticism—he was an expert musician. Against only one change in the paper's discipline were there any protests. W. P. Garrison, the son of the great Abolitionist, hastened to abolish the "filthy habit" of smoking in the offices, a rule that caused incalculable anguish among some of the veteran newspaper men; it is said that George Cary Eggleston's early resignation was partly due to it. Schurz probably consented on the ground of the fire-hazard.

A few stories have come down showing "the General" as he worked, his tall form bent short-sightedly over his pad in a little space that he would grub out from the accumulated chaos of papers and letters on his desk. The famous Sullivan-Ryan prize-fight occurred in February, 1882, and when the first dispatches arrived, Linn, the news-editor, hurried to consult Schurz, telling him that under Bryant the *Post* had always thrown such news into the waste-basket. This was the fact: when the McCool-Jones fight occurred in 1867, the paper had suppressed a column from the Associated Press, and mentioned the "revolting" affair only in a short, tart editorial. But Schurz eagerly read the dispatches. "Mr. Linn," he

ordered, "publish a brief result of each round, and head it, 'Brutal Prize-Fight'; and," he added with a twinkle, "let me see a copy on each round as soon as it comes in." Linn commented on returning to his desk, "The General is an old fighter himself." This, however, was an unusual display of humor on Schurz's part. There existed from the Civil War until 1918 a daily feature on the editorial page called "Newspaper Waifs," consisting of several sticksful of jokes clipped from various sources. It was always popular; in 1894, after Godkin's denunciation of his Venezuela message, Cleveland was asked whether he still read the *Evening Post,* and replied, "Yes —I read the waifs." Schurz insisted on seeing the copy for the feature; and, to keep it alive, the managing editor found it necessary to include daily a half dozen poor and obvious jokes with the good ones. With unerring eye, glancing down the column, Schurz would o.k. the poor quips and cancel most of the others.

The majority of Schurz's editorials naturally dealt with party politics and the affairs of the Federal Government. The assassination of Garfield (July 2, 1881) and the succession of Arthur to the Presidency, awakened much apprehension among editors of liberal views, which the *Evening Post* shared. For some time it found President Arthur's conduct reassuring, but it soon had occasion to condemn a number of his appointments—notably his nomination of Roscoe Conkling to the Supreme Bench, which Conkling declined, and his selection of Wm. E. Chandler to be Secretary of the Navy—as evidence that he was introducing the methods of the New York machine into national politics. Garfield's death made the question of the Presidency in 1884 important, and during 1883 the *Post* uttered frequent monitions that the nomination of Blaine would disrupt the Republican party and lead to defeat. A characteristic utterance by Schurz in July, 1883, contained some shrewd observations on party character as it appeared just a year before the campaign. The essential difference between the Democrats and Republicans, he wrote, was that the former had sterling leaders

but a wrongheaded rank and file, while the latter had many pernicious leaders but a sound general body. Men like Cleveland, Bayard, Vilas, and Hewitt believed in civil service reform and hard money, while men like Blaine, Conkling, Arthur, and Wm. Walter Phelps believed in spoils and a high tariff; but the great mass of Democrats would try to drag the leaders down to their own level, while the mass of Republicans—so Schurz hoped—would turn their backs on Blaine and Arthur.

Early in 1883, when the question of Federal aid to the common schools was raised, an issue still important, Schurz wrote disapproving it, as an interference with the functions and self-reliance of the States. He had the gratification of hailing the Pendleton Civil Service Act, the first great step toward fulfillment of a reform on which he somehow found time to lecture as well as write. He defended the Chinese against unfair legislation in California, and argued constantly for a fairer policy toward the Indians. Perhaps his most important editorials were several in the latter half of 1882 arguing for an executive budget, beyond doubt the first elaborate demand for this reform made by any American editor. He wrote (August, 1882):

> It is obvious how much in the way of bringing order out of chaos would be accomplished by introducing the practice of having a complete budget of necessary expenditures, and of the taxation required to cover them, prepared by the executive branch of the government, and submitted to Congress at the beginning of each session. What we have now is merely the estimates of the different departments of the amounts of money they want. What is needed is, aside from the grouping together of these amounts, showing the total sum required by the government for the year, a clear statement of the different kinds of existing taxes, with their yield, and the opinion of the Executive as to what taxes will best subserve the purpose, what taxes may be cut down or abolished, and so on. A clear summing up in a statement of this kind would be sure to attract the attention and to reach the understanding of every intelligent taxpayer. . . .

By far the most interesting of Schurz's editorials, how-

ever, were a number upon foreign topics. He wrote repeatedly upon the affairs of Germany, where Bismarck, given a free hand by the fast aging William I, was asserting the absolute power of the throne, passing anti-Socialist legislation, and otherwise taking a reactionary course which Schurz lost no opportunity to denounce. The editor pinned his hope of a better policy to the Crown Prince, the short-lived and noble-minded Emperor Frederick. From time to time Schurz would select news from the European press and illuminate it with his special knowledge. Thus in the summer of 1883, under the title "A Strange Story," he wrote upon the trial of the Jews of a Hungarian hamlet on the charge of sacrificial murder; the editorial was pure narrative, but its effect was a caustic denunciation of religious bigotry. When in the fall of 1882 Gottfried Kinkel died, Schurz characterized his old German comrade as the incarnation of the vague, impractical idealism of 1848, an idealism that recked nothing of hard political realities; and his editorial contained a striking bit of reminiscence:

> It was this spirit which seized upon Kinkel, who was then a professor extraordinary at the University of Bonn, lecturing on the history of art and literature. He was a poet of note; of an artistic nature, also, ardent and impatient of restraint. He was an orator of wonderful fertility of imagination and power of expression. . . . He preached advanced democratic ideas, and his political programme fairly represented the romantic indefiniteness of the whole revolutionary movement. When the reaction came, he left his professorship, his wife and children, and, gun in hand, fought as a private soldier in the insurrectionary army of Baden. In one of the engagements he was wounded and taken, and then sentenced to imprisonment for life, put into a penitentiary, clothed in a convict's garb, and forced to spin wool—the mere thought of which touched every heart in Germany. Then he was brought from the penitentiary to be tried at Cologne for an attempt upon an arsenal, in which he had taken part—an offense not covered by the sentence already passed upon him. The court was thronged with spectators and with soldiers. He defended himself. Before he had closed his speech, which was like a poem, the judge, the jury, the spectators, the soldiers, the very

gendarmes by his side, were melting in tears. His wife stood outside the bar, forbidden to approach him; but when in the agony of grief he called out to her to come to him, the soldiers involuntarily stepped aside to let her rush into his arms. It was as if all Germany had looked on and wept with those who were in the courtroom. Then he was taken back to the penitentiary and set to wool-spinning again, until in November, 1850, some friends aided him in escaping. Again the popular heart was stirred in its poetic sympathies. His whole public career was like the most romantic episode of a romantic time—a fair representative of the spirit of these days, their heroic devotion to an ideal, and their indefiniteness of aim.

Some striking editorials by Schurz and Godkin, denouncing the vicious operations of Jay Gould in connection with the Manhattan Elevated Railroad, had a dramatic sequel. Gould and his associates, enraged by them, determined to retaliate by a personal attack upon Schurz. In pursuance of this purpose, they concocted an ingenious double-barreled slander, aimed both at Schurz and Henry Villard. In substance, it was that as Secretary of the Interior Gen. Schurz had prostituted his rulings to the advancement of Villard's railway interests, and had been given his shares in the *Evening Post* as a reward. Not only was this piece of mendacity worked up in detail in the *World,* which Jay Gould controlled, but it found its way into an article by George W. Julian in the *North American Review* for March, 1883. Schurz had a short way with the authors of malicious fabrications. During the Civil War Gen. Leslie Combs had charged him with cowardice at Chancellorsville, and he had instantly called Combs a liar and challenged him to a test of courage in the next battle. Now he blew Julian to pieces in the *Evening Post* of the week of March 26. The facts were that the "restoration" to the Northern Pacific of a forfeited land grant, the offense charged against Schurz, had been made in accordance with a ruling by the Attorney-General and not the Secretary of the Interior; that it was based upon principles applied in the same way to many other cases; that Henry Villard did not for

nearly two years afterward have any interest in the Northern Pacific; and that, on the contrary, he was interested in a rival enterprise. It is unnecessary to say that those who had believed this story in the first place were few and simple-minded.

Of the breadth of Schurz's influence there are many evidences. A few days after he took the editorial chair ex-President Hayes declared to him: "I must see what you write. . . . Mrs. Hayes will not forgive me if she loses anything you write." The files of his correspondence, kept in the Congressional Library, indicate that a majority of Congress subscribed to the daily or semi-weekly *Evening Post*. The Secretary of the Treasury was glad to supply seven pages of information in his own handwriting upon a question of the day; and information for news or editorial use was volunteered to Schurz by a considerable list of consuls abroad. It was at this time that a young Atlanta lawyer named Woodrow Wilson contributed a series of articles upon conditions at the South—"entirely off my own bat," writes ex-President Wilson. The *Post* was read by German-Americans all over the country, and many of its editorials were reprinted by German-language journals. That Schurz felt this nation-wide interest as a constant stimulus there can be no doubt. Always a hard worker, he gave his best energies to the newspaper in spite of constant demands for public addresses and magazine articles; he wrote in 1881 that he was at his desk daily from nine to four-thirty, and in 1883, when the editor of the American Statesmen Series requested him to finish his volumes on Henry Clay as soon as possible, he replied that his duties allowed him only parts of two or three evenings a week.

From the outset many friends of the *Post* had predicted that an editorship of "all the talents" would work no better than had the ministry of that character in England; and the prediction was soon verified. As Isaac H. Bromley, a humorist on the *Tribune* said—a witticism which Godkin sometimes repeated with enjoyment—"there were too many mules in the same pasture."

Schurz and Godkin had greatly admired each other before they were associated, and were entirely congenial in their rather aristocratic intellectualism and their views on political subjects; but their methods of appealing to the public were not merely different, but disparate. Schurz employed argument and calm exposition, while Godkin varied his argument with ridicule, cutting irony, and even denunciation. There is no doubt that before long Godkin came to feel that Schurz's editorials were too narrow in range, and too arid in the mode of presentation. On the other hand, Schurz did not always approve of Godkin's ironic humor, and thought that he was sometimes too savagely cutting in tone. Neither was satisfied with the editorial page. Indeed, Godkin's dissatisfaction in the late spring of 1883 became so acute that he concluded that the *Evening Post* experiment was a failure, that the first impetus of the change had been lost, and that heroic measures were necessary to raise the level of the newspaper. He differed greatly from Schurz, he explained, as to the quality of the editorial writing, and wished to dismiss one staff member, Robert Burch, and employ in his stead some one especially good at writing pungent paragraphs. The result was an arrangement between Godkin and Schurz by which the latter agreed to relinquish the editorship-in-chief on Aug. 1, when he went on his summer vacation; with the understanding that if, after another two years, the dissatisfaction continued, Horace White should take Godkin's place at the helm. Schurz duly left for his vacation, Burch was dismissed, and Joseph Bucklin Bishop, a brilliant young editorial writer for the *Tribune,* was brought on in his stead.

At this juncture there occurred an event which brought Schurz and Godkin into abrupt conflict over a question not merely of the manner and quality of the *Post's* editorials, but of its views. Schurz had always been much more sympathetic with the laboring masses than Godkin, and in a time of many labor troubles their opinions were bound to clash. Late in July, 1883, commenced a strike of the railway telegraphers, which at first threatened a

widespread interruption of communications and transportation. Schurz's utterances were impartial, but he had no sooner left than Godkin, as he had a right to do, gave the *Post* a tone hostile to the strikers. His view was that in an industry so vitally connected with the public's interests, a sudden crippling cessation of work was not allowable; that a national tribunal should be set up to decide such controversies, and that when the decision was once rendered, "general strikes in defiance or evasion of it should be punishable in some manner." For this judgment much can be said, though it is certainly not one that the *Evening Post* to-day would defend.

On Aug. 8 Godkin made the *Post* declare that "the 30,000 or 40,000 men whom some of our modern corporations employ in telegraphic or railroad service have to be governed on the same principles as an army." This was more than Schurz could bear, and he no sooner read the editorial, at his summer hotel in the Catskills, than he seized a pen and wrote Godkin denying that any man has to be "governed" on army principles save those who voluntarily enlist. "The relations between those who sell their labor by the day and their employers, whether the latter be great corporations or single individuals, are simple contract relations, and it seems to me monstrous to hold that the act of one or more laboring men ending that contract by stopping their work is, or should be, considered and treated in any case as desertion from the army is considered and treated." He added that he thought Godkin's editorial one which would do the *Evening Post* essential harm, and cause it to be regarded as a corporation organ. He would publicly disclaim any share in the responsibility for it did he not abhor the sensationalism of such a step. Godkin and Schurz were equally positive and tenacious of any opinion once fully assumed, and there was no issue from their disagreement except the resignation of one of them. That of Schurz was formally announced during the autumn. It is a gratifying fact that whatever temporary ill-feeling subsisted between them almost immediately disappeared, and was

replaced by their former mutual high esteem. Within a few weeks after his departure Schurz contributed an editorial to the *Evening Post* upon Edward Lasker, the German liberal, and throughout the campaign of 1884 Godkin's references to Schurz were warmly cordial.

The regret of the *Evening Post's* friends over Schurz's resignation was tempered by their sense that a disruption of the original arrangement was inevitable. Every newspaper has to have a single ultimate arbiter of its policy. The only exceptions to this rule are those journals which take no real interest in maintaining a thoughtful, useful policy. With neither Schurz nor Godkin willing to accept a subordinate position, with their distinct differences of temperament, the wonder is that they worked so smoothly for two full years.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GODKIN, THE MUGWUMP MOVEMENT, AND GROVER CLEVELAND'S CAREER

EDWIN LAWRENCE GODKIN was not quite fifty-two when he became editor-in-chief in 1883, and was in the prime of life, with fifteen years of vigorous journalistic labor before him. He wrote Charles Eliot Norton that he had no intention, even if his health permitted, of staying with the *Evening Post* more than ten years, but his heart was enlisted far too keenly in his work and the great causes he espoused to let him go until failing health made his retirement in 1899 imperative. It is natural that his published letters should emphasize his joyous sense of a greater freedom as he entered the newspaper office; his feeling that he was giving himself to a publication which did not depend absolutely upon his pen and mind as the *Nation* did, and could have his vacations like other workers. But he felt also his new responsibilities. He valued the opportunity the *Post* gave him to impress his opinions daily upon the public; to reach a wider audience—the *Post's* 20,000 buyers as well as the *Nation's* 10,000; and to give more attention to certain subjects, as municipal misgovernment. "My notion is, you know," he wrote W. P. Garrison in 1883, "that the *Evening Post* ought to make a specialty of being the paper to which sober-minded people would look at crises of this kind, instead of hollering and bellering and shouting platitudes like the *Herald* and *Times*."

The independent character of the political course Godkin would steer had been fully indicated by the volumes of the *Nation*. This weekly, founded when the last shots of the Civil War were ringing in men's ears, had undertaken the fearless discussion of public questions at a moment that seemed peculiarly unpropitious. The prev-

alent tendency of the years after the war, as Godkin said, was a fierce illiberalism, represented by such leaders as Thaddeus Stevens in the House. The *Nation* had at once declared war upon this narrow, rancorous political spirit, and attempted to substitute progressive and enlightened views. It had questioned the wisdom of the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. It had been ten years in advance of public opinion in its attacks upon that demagogic politician, Ben Butler. It had been one of the first Republican organs to denounce the carpet-bag régime at the South, and to assail President Grant for his failures. In 1876 occurred its most serious collision with a considerable body of readers; it condemned the Southern frauds which gave Hayes the Presidency, and called his induction into office a "most deplorable and debauching enterprise," this course costing it 3,000 subscribers. Godkin inclined in his sympathies to the Republican party, but he would not hesitate to break from it upon any question of principle.

When Godkin assumed the helm of the *Evening Post,* he had a shrewd suspicion that the Presidential campaign about to open would present a fundamental question of principle. As he wrote long after, James G. Blaine's audacity, good humor, horror of rebel brigadiers, and contempt for reformers made his nomination sooner or later inevitable, and such a nomination in Godkin's eyes presented a moral question of the first magnitude. No American newspaper has ever conducted a more effective campaign fight than that which the *Evening Post* waged in 1884. It was a fight not only against Blaine, but in behalf of the one contemporary American statesman whom Godkin, in his long journalistic career after 1865, highly admired.

Of reformers like Godkin, Blaine wrote in advance of his nomination: "They are noisy, but not numerous; pharisaical, but not practical; ambitious, but not wise; pretentious, but not powerful." The *Evening Post's* opinion of Blaine was equally frank. It believed that the Mulligan letters, published in 1876, convicted Blaine of

prostituting his office as a member of Congress and Speaker in order to make money in various Western railways, and of lying in a vain effort to conceal the fact. It added as lesser counts against him that in his twelve years in the House he had never performed a single service for good government, and had done it much disservice, as by his covert opposition to civil service reform, and his defense of the spoliation of the public lands; that in all his public appearances he had been sensational, theatrical, and a lover of notoriety; and that while Secretary of State under Garfield "he plunged into spoils, and wallowed in them for three months, like a rhinoceros in an African pool, using every office he could lay his hands on for the reward of his henchmen and hangers-on, without shame or scruple." But its central objection was always that he had sold his official power and influence.

The great "Mugwump" bolt from the Republican party as soon as Blaine was nominated took with it many influential Eastern journals—*Harper's Weekly,* the New York *Times,* the Boston *Herald,* the Boston *Advertiser,* and the Springfield *Republican*—but it took no other pen like Godkin's. Long in advance of the convention, he and Schurz had warned the Republican leaders that Blaine's nomination would disrupt the party. The *Evening Post* pointed out in November, 1883, that the next election would probably be close, and that New York, where the voters were more independent than anywhere else, would certainly be the pivotal State. The election of 1876 had hung upon several artificial decisions in the South; that of 1884 would be likely to hang upon the judgment of a small body of thoughtful, impartial voters. On April 23, 1884, a rich New Jersey Congressman named William Walter Phelps published an article defending Blaine, to which Godkin immediately replied in a long and elaborate review of "Mr. Blaine's Railroad Transactions." Thereafter the paper kept up a drumfire upon the "tattooed man."

How could the campaign be most effectively conducted? Godkin saw that of the arsenal of weapons available,

the parallel column could be used with the most telling force. The attack, in the first place, must be focussed upon the Republican candidate. No one cared about the rival platforms. As for the general character of the two parties, most voters believed the Republican party to be superior, and Godkin himself would have thought so had not its jobbing, corrupt element, as he said, gradually "come to a head, in the fashion of a tumor, in Mr. James G. Blaine." How could Blaine's weaknesses be most clearly exposed? By his own letters, made public through Mulligan, which stripped his dealings as a Congressman with the Little Rock & Fort Smith, the Union Pacific, and the Northern Pacific interests, and by his own speeches defending these transactions. Adroit though he was, Blaine in his panicky efforts at self-justification had repeatedly contradicted both himself and the admitted facts. This, with all its implications, could be concisely proved by the parallel columns.

Not all these contradictions were immediately evident. By the end of September, just after Mulligan had published a new group of Blaine letters, Godkin and his associates, Horace White, Joseph Bucklin Bishop, and A. G. Sedgwick, had detected a half dozen. By November they had raised the total to ten. Reprinted day after day, they had a value that will be evident from a couple of examples:

BLAINE LIE NO. 5

"My whole connection with the road has been open as the day. If there had been anything to conceal about it, I should never have touched it. Wherever concealment is advisable, avoidance is advisable, and I do not know any better test to apply to the honor and fairness of a business transaction." — Mr. Blaine's speech in Congress, April 24, 1876.

"I want you to send me a letter such as the enclosed draft. . . . Regard this letter as strictly confidential. Do not show it to anyone. If you can't get the letter written in season for the nine o'clock mail to New York, please be sure to mail it during the night. . . . Sincerely, J. G. B. (Burn this letter)"— Blaine to Fisher, April 16, 1876.

BLAINE LIE NO. 9 [IN PART]

"Third.—I do not own and never did own an acre of coal land or any other kind of land in the Hocking Valley or in any other part of Ohio. My letter to the Hon. Hezekiah Bundy in July last *on this same subject* was accurately true.

Very truly yours,
J. G. BLAINE."

(Letter to the Hon. Wm. McKinley, dated Bellesire, Ohio, Oct. 4, 1884.)

"BOSTON, Dec. 15, 1880.

"Received of James G. Blaine, $25,180.50, being payment in full for one share in the association formed for the purchase of lands known as the Hope Furnace Tract, situated in Vinton and Athens Counties, Ohio. This receipt to be exchanged for a certificate when prepared.

J. N. DENISON, Agent."

One particularly notable use of the parallel columns was in contradiction of Blaine's statement that subsequent to his purchase of the bonds of the Fort Smith railroad, only one act of Congress had been passed applying to the line, and that merely to rectify a previous mistake in legislation. The fact was, as the paper showed, that the act repealed the proviso that the railway's grant of public lands should not be sold for more than $2.50 an acre, thus adding to the value of its securities.

The deadly parallel columns were applied to careless campaign speakers for Blaine. They were repeatedly used against the leading Blaine newspapers, the New York *Tribune,* Philadelphia *Press,* Chicago *Tribune,* and Cincinnati *Commercial.* A happy stroke, for example, exhibited their efforts to ignore the second batch of Mulligan letters:

BLAINE'S OWN VIEW OF THE LETTERS	EARLY VIEWS OF HIS ORGANS
"There is not a word in the letters which is not entirely consistent with the most scrupulous integrity and honor. I hope that every Republican paper in the United States will republish them in full."—Mr. Blaine's interview with the Kennebec *Journal,* Sept. 15, 1884.	The *Tribune,* Sept. 15, 1884, suppressed all the letters and had no comments. The Boston *Journal,* Sept. 15, 1884, suppressed nine letters, gave misleading summaries of many of them, and commented not at all upon the suppressed ones. The Philadelphia *Press,* Sept. 15, 1884, published the letters in a part of its edition only, and had no comment.

For the unprecedented scandal-mongering of this campaign, which Godkin called fit for a tenement stairway, the *Evening Post* and other decent newspapers felt only disgust. But when the vicious elements in Buffalo which had learned to hate Cleveland as a reform Mayor and Governor revealed the fact that, as a young man, he had once formed an illicit connection, the *Post* felt it necessary to treat the charge in detail and place it in its true importance. A large number of clergymen, suffrage leaders, and others hastened to declare that no man with an illegitimate child could be supported for the Presidency. Considering Blaine's character, this seemed to the *Post* both ridiculous and vicious. Which was better fitted to be President, a man once unchaste, as Franklin, Webster, and Jefferson had been, or a man who sold his official

power for money? Godkin argued that in a statesman official probity was all important, while an early lapse in personal morals was of minor significance:

"Well, but," we shall be asked, "does not the charge against Cleveland, as you yourselves state and admit it, disqualify him, in your estimation, for the Presidency of the United States?" We answer frankly: "Yes, if his opponent be free from this stain, and as good a man in all other ways." We should like to see candidates for the Presidency models of all the virtues, pure as the snow and steadfast as the eternal hills. But when the alternative is a man of whom the Buffalo *Express,* a political opponent, said immediately after his nomination, "that the people of Buffalo had known him as one of their worthiest citizens, one of their manliest men, faithful to his clients, faithful to his friends, and faithful to every public trust" . . . a good son and good brother, and unmarried in order that he might be the better son and brother, against whom nothing can be said except that he has not been proof against one of the most powerful temptations by which human nature is assailed; or, on the other hand, a man convicted out of his own mouth of having publicly lied in order to hide his jobbery in office, of having offered his judicial decisions as a sign of his possible usefulness to railroad speculators in case they paid him his price, of trading in charters which had been benefited by legislation in which he took part, and of having broken his word of honor in order to destroy documentary evidence of his corruption—a man who has accumulated a fortune in a few years on the salary of a Congressman—then we say emphatically no—ten thousand times no.

A public office like the Presidency was not a reward for a blameless private life, insisted Godkin, but a heavy duty and responsibility, to be given only to a statesman of ability and official integrity. Schurz pointed out that Hamilton, the founder of the *Post,* was once placed in a position where he had to remain silent concerning a slur upon his honesty in office, or confess to an offense like Cleveland's; and he hesitated not an instant to clear his public honor at this cost to private reputation. The articles of the *Evening Post* and *Nation* powerfully conduced to right thinking on this subject.

The abuse visited upon the *Evening Post* in this cam-

paign was the greatest since the slavery struggle. The Chicago *Tribune* said that "it was a natural instinct of servility to the great corporations that has bound it with hoops of steel to Cleveland's cause"; a remarkable charge in view of the fact that Jay Gould, H. H. Rogers, Cyrus W. Field, Russell Sage, H. D. Armour, and other corporation heads supported Blaine, and by their dinner with him at Delmonico's just before election—"Belshazzar's Feast"—did not a little to defeat him. "The *Evening Post* has finally gone down so low," remarked the Poughkeepsie *Eagle* in September, "that it lies about itself." The Harrisburgh *Telegraph* published an attack by Bryant upon Jefferson as proof that the *Post* had always been addicted to malevolent personalities; not mentioning the fact that Bryant had written these verses in 1803, at the age of nine, twenty-three years before he joined the *Post*. The New York *Tribune* turned Godkin's statement, "Cleveland's virtues are those which bind human society together," into "Cleveland's sins are of the sort which bind society together," and repeatedly printed it in this form. As for Dana's *Sun*, it continually called the *Post* "stupid"; but Dana this year was proving his own brilliance by supporting the farcical Greenback candidacy of Ben Butler, who polled 3,500 votes in New York city.

On the other hand, the paper received a steady stream of congratulatory letters. Henry Ward Beecher wrote in September that the editorials were clear, honest, and weighty. "How any one who has read them can vote for Blaine passes my comprehension. They ought to be circulated over the whole land as one of the best campaign documents. They stand in striking contrast with the inefficient speeches of Hawley, Hoard, and Dawes, and the essays and letters of Mead, Bliss & Co. Allow me to say that the *Evening Post* has never stood higher in its long and honorable life than now. It may almost be called the ideal family newspaper." As a matter of fact, the editorials *were* circulated as campaign documents. Godkin's articles on Blaine's railway transactions sold 20,000 copies in pamphlet form before Sept. 20,

when a revised edition appeared. In October the *Post* issued a pamphlet called "The Young Men's Party," by Col. T. W. Higginson, and another which embraced a reply to George Bliss and the table of ten Blaine falsehoods. In the closing days of the campaign the paper received subscriptions of $1,000 a week for the independent Campaign Fund. Godkin maintained his fierce editorial attacks to the last moment, and did not fail to make the most of the "Rum-Romanism-Rebellion" indiscretion of the Rev. Mr. Burchard, saying that Blaine had given "tacit assent" to this insult against Catholicism.

The fight was by no means won with the closing of the polls on election day, Nov. 4. Early next morning every one knew that Cleveland had carried the South, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Indiana, that his election was assured if he had carried New York, and that New York was doubtful. The *World* claimed the Empire State for the Democrats, and the *Sun* conceded it to them, but the *Tribune* declared that Blaine had won. The *Post's* headlines that afternoon ran: "Cleveland Probably Elected—213 Electoral Votes for Him—New York in Cleveland Column"; while the editorial declared simply that, with the returns very backward, the indications were that Cleveland had a safe majority. Crowds all day filled the streets in front of the bulletin boards, and for a time there was a threat of rioting against Jay Gould and the Western Union Telegraph officers, who were accused of delaying and tampering with the returns in the interest of Blaine. With an audacity born of their memory of 1876, the Republicans continued to claim the victory all day Thursday the 6th. The *Tribune* footed up the county returns for New York as giving Blaine a plurality of 1,166, but the addition was inaccurate—they really gave Cleveland a plurality of 1281 The Associated Press, whose returns were inexcusably fragmentary and late, gave Cleveland 1,057 plurality, and the *Post*, with its own dispatches from every county save one, 1,378—the official figure being later given as 1,149. The excited *Mail and Express* made the same blunder as the *Tribune*,

claiming New York for Blaine when its own inaccurately added table of counties gave Cleveland a plurality of 4,000. At two a. m. on the 7th the Associated Press announced Cleveland's election, and Godkin was able to write:

> At daylight this morning everybody conceded Cleveland's election save the *Tribune,* which remains in doubt. If it persists in declaring Blaine elected there will be two inauguration ceremonies on March 4, one of Cleveland in Washington and one of Blaine on the steps of the *Tribune* building, the oath of office being administered by William Walter Phelps.

II

Our one American President whose dislike of newspapers in general could be called intense was Cleveland. He deeply resented the mud-slinging in which they had indulged against both himself and Blaine during his first campaign; and when he married in 1886, he was outraged by the manner in which a crowd of correspondents followed him into the Maryland hills on his honeymoon, occupied points of vantage, and spied upon him with field-glasses. Late that year he spoke of the "silly, mean, and cowardly lies" of the press, and of the "ghoulish glee" with which it desecrated every sacred relation of private life, an utterance which Mr. Godkin emphasized by editorial endorsement, for no editor ever hated newspaper mendacity and sensationalism more than Godkin. Cleveland's hottest wrath was reserved for Dana's *Sun,* which professed to believe that he culled his speeches from an encyclopedia, and that Miss Cleveland wrote his messages to Congress; when in 1890 the *Sun* made some offensive reference to his corpulence, Mr. Cleveland expressed his feelings without restraint. But he made one exception in his general dislike. He read the *Evening Post* faithfully, respected its views, and had a high regard for Mr. Godkin, whom he knew personally.

His friendliness had ample reason, for the *Post* supported almost every act of his first administration. It praised his early observance, in spirit and letter, of the

Civil Service law, and his courageous veto of vicious little pension bills. Above all, it maintained that his administration was an invaluable demonstration that the unity of the nation was real, that it was no longer necessary for one section and party to monopolize political power. One New Yorker, the day after Cleveland's election, had offered in a fit of rage and despair to sell Godkin his securities for fifty cents on the dollar. Some men had believed that the tariff would be wrecked overnight, and that the Confederacy would return "to the saddle" and compel the North to pay an indemnity of billions in settlement of Civil War damages. From this nightmare, which disposed men to put up with all sorts of Republican corruption, a Democratic administration had been necessary to rescue the country.

Mr. Godkin never called Cleveland brilliant, and praised him rather for an honest obstructiveness, balking the schemes of raiders, visionaries, and predatory interests, than for marked constructive abilities. Like the other "Mugwump" organs, the *Evening Post* was offended in 1887-88 by his apparent acquiescence in several raids upon the civil service by spoilsmen. In April, 1889, it accused the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. J. H. Maynard, of bringing heavy pressure to bear upon the New York Custom House for the dismissal of capable Republicans. Maynard denied the charge in a hot telegram; the *Evening Post* appealed to the Senate Committee upon the Civil Service to come to New York and investigate; and it did so, sustaining the *Post's* charges in their entirety. But Mr. Godkin never forgot the consideration which Cleveland later urged in defending himself: "You know the things in which I yielded; but no one save myself can ever know the things which I resisted." The President, said the *Evening Post*, had fallen short of his promises, but had done far more than any predecessor. "No man, for example, who has filled the Presidential chair since Jackson's day would have listened for one moment to the suggestion that the New York Post Office should be taken out of politics, or would have

kept the Custom House in its present comparatively neutral condition, or postponed the removal of the great bulk of officers to the end of their terms, or extended in any degree the application of the rules, or have so steadily used his veto to oppose Congressional jobbery and extravagance. No one, too, has kept the White House and its purlieus so free from the small scandals which worked so much disgrace in the days of Grant, Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur."

In 1888 the *Post* showed genuine enthusiasm in advocating the election of Cleveland over Benjamin Harrison. His courageous message in favor of a low tariff in December, 1887, which did so much to ensure his defeat the next fall, met the views of the editors precisely. The Republicans declared in their platform for maintenance of the existing tariff, but for a reduction in the internal revenue taxes, and Godkin labeled them the party of "high clothes and cheap whisky." A sharp attack was made upon Harrison's Congressional record—"the advocate of centralization, the defender of reckless pension schemes, the friend of Hennepin Canal jobs." Once more, but moderately, parallel columns were employed:

MURAT HALSTEAD (REP.)	HUGH M'CULLOCH (REP.)
"The bottom truth about Cleveland is that he may have been a Copperhead, for he is of about that grade of snake, but he has been too ignorant all his life to be an intelligent member of any political party."	"I have watched Mr. Cleveland's Administration very carefully, and I consider it to have been marked with signal ability and uprightness."

Cleveland's defeat the *Evening Post* attributed in part, it is interesting to note, to the folly of the New York Democrats in nominating David B. Hill for Governor, a choice which disgusted independent voters. Naturally, Harrison's administration confirmed by a half dozen acts the paper's loyalty to the ex-President. The choice of Blaine to be Secretary of State, the McKinley Tariff Act, the Service Pensions Act of 1890, and the Sherman Silver-Purchase Act seemed to the editors, and to a great body of intelligent and thoughtful citizens, to be so many milestones on a road of perversity and danger. The reckless way in which our foreign relations were handled,

as we shall see later, aroused grave apprehensions in Mr. Godkin. At the moment when the disgust of the *Evening Post* with the Republican Party was deepest, in February, 1891, Cleveland's famous letter in opposition to the free coinage of silver, characterizing it as a "dangerous and reckless experiment," was published. All his enemies, Dana at their head, thought that by this courageous act he had destroyed himself politically. So did many Democrats. "Again," wrote Godkin, "the shrewd politicians sat down on the party stoop and wept, and prepared sorrowfully to nominate a first-class juggler in the person of David B. Hill, who was to show the wretched Mugwumps how much better it was to be able to keep six balls in the air than to be able to show the absurdity of a fluctuating currency."

But Cleveland's uncompromising stroke filled the *Evening Post* with joy. It had feared the Democratic Party was rushing down a steep place to destruction by accepting an alliance with these silver enthusiasts who were trying to debase the currency. Now it had faith in the willingness of the party rank and file to respond to the ex-President's unflinching words. As it turned out, the newspaper was right. The people recognized the voice of a real statesman, and the scheming bosses who had rejoiced at his supposed political suicide, found that he had at once rescued the party from a ruinous coalition with the Populists, and made his own renomination inevitable. In the canvass which followed this renomination, the *Evening Post* found it unnecessary to say much about the silver question, so completely had Cleveland knocked it out of the campaign, and it centered its attention upon the McKinley Tariff. That wages had fallen in many industries, that prices of many groups of commodities had risen, and that a hundred "tariff trusts" had attained new vigor behind the McKinley bulwark, was shown in a long series of editorial articles. Lowell had already, while the McKinley Act was pending, published anonymously in the *Evening Post* a satirical poem upon the argument that higher rates were needed to protect our "infant in-

dustries." When Cleveland was decisively reëlected that November, Godkin traced his victory primarily to the effect his anti-tariff message of 1887 and his anti-free-silver letter of 1891 had produced upon men:

> Mr. Cleveland's triumph to-day has been largely due to the young voters who have come on the stage since the reign of passion and prejudice came to an end and the era of discussion has opened. If the last canvass has consisted largely of appeals to reason, to facts, to the lessons of human experience . . . it is to Mr. Cleveland, let us tell them, that they owe it. But they are indebted to him for something far more valuable than even this—for an example of splendid courage in the defense and assertion of honestly formed opinions; of Roman constancy under defeat, and of patient reliance on the power of deliberation and persuasion on the American people. Nothing is more important, in these days of boodle, of indifference, of cheap bellicose patriotism, than that this confidence in the might of common sense and sound doctrine and free speech should be kept alive.

No one reading this editorial would have believed that within little more than three years Mr. Godkin would turn savagely upon the man whose fine qualities he thus praised. Mr. Godkin would not have believed it. Cleveland's second administration began well, and his policy was particularly liked by the *Post* in that field of foreign relations in which the break was to come. He withdrew the treaty for the annexation of Hawaii, which Godkin had opposed. He protected American rights in Cuba, but maintained strict American neutrality in the war Spain was waging there. When Great Britain put in a claim of damages against Nicaragua, and landed marines to collect the money, Cleveland acted with admirable discretion and tact. His belligerent Venezuelan message of December, 1895, indeed, was almost a flash out of a clear sky.

To understand the consternation with which Godkin received this message, which seemed to presage certain war with England, it must be appreciated how much he abhorred jingoism and war. When Crimean correspondent for the London *Daily News* he had described the

horrors of the battlefields with indignation; and the suffering back of the lines—"the great ocean of misery which war has caused to roll over the heads of mankind ever since wars began"—he thought even more heartrending. He was no pacifist: a war in a good cause, like the war of the North to extinguish slavery and disunion, he approved. But wars merely to vindicate what some one fancied to be "national honor" he abominated as the worst relic of savagery:

> Jingoism is, in fact, like Indian readiness for war, simply another name for imperfect civilization. It is a simple outburst like negro-burning, lynching, and jail-breaking, of the imperfectly subdued barbarous instincts of an earlier time. To get men to abandon fighting as the chief and most honorable business of their lives, and the only respectable way of ending disputes, has been the main work of modern civilization; and what hard work it has been, one has only to read a little Froissart or Joinville to see.

We must also appreciate that Cleveland's act seemed to Godkin a base surrender to jingo elements in American politics which he had hitherto been opposing. As we have said, the *Evening Post* had lamented what it thought the defiant tone of Harrison's foreign policy. This it attributed to Blaine's desire to be a "brilliant" Secretary of State. When he held that position under Garfield, he had promptly embroiled the United States with Chile, and it had fallen to President Arthur to appoint a new Secretary and extricate the nation. Seven years later he had returned, and what had he done? He had made an effort to exercise the right of search on British vessels in the Bering Sea, had filled Harrison's administration with the resulting controversy, and had maneuvered the United States into a position in which it was defeated in arbitration proceedings. Since Cleveland's inauguration the editors of the *Evening Post* had constantly deplored the bellicose talk indulged in by a considerable group of Republicans. Henry Cabot Lodge in the spring of 1895 had predicted a war in Europe, hinted that we might be drawn into it, and said that the British fortifications at

Halifax, Bermuda, Kingston, and Esquimault "threaten us." The same month Senator Frye, at Bridgeport, had called for a strong navy, and declared: "We [the Republicans] will show people a foreign policy that is American in every fiber, and hoist the American flag on whatever island we think best, and no hand shall ever pull it down." Senator Cullom wanted Cuba instantly annexed. Godkin was justified in writing (Feb. 13, 1895):

> The number of men and officials in this country who are now mad to fight somebody is appalling. Navy officers dream of war and talk and lecture about it incessantly. The Senate debates are filled with predictions of impending war and with talk of preparing for it at once. With the country under the necessity for the most stringent economy, appropriations of $12,000,000 for battleships are urged upon Congress, not because we need them now, but because we shall need them "in the next great war." Most truculent and bloodthirsty of all, the Jingo editors keep up a din day after day about the way we could cripple one country's fleet and destroy another's commerce, and fill the heads of boys and silly men with the idea that war is the normal state of a civilized country.

To the early stages of the controversy between Venezuela and England over the western boundary of British Guiana neither the *Evening Post* nor any other journal paid close attention. Mr. Godkin did not think that the Monroe Doctrine could properly be stretched to cover American interference in the quarrel; and when Secretary Olney asked Great Britain to submit the dispute to arbitration, and Lord Salisbury refused, Godkin defended Salisbury's action upon the ground that we had tended to prejudge the case in Venezuela's favor. As yet the editor was not disturbed, trusting the President implicitly. But suddenly, on Dec. 17, 1895, Cleveland sent Congress a message asking for the appointment of a commission to determine the boundary, and stating that it would be the duty of the United States "to resist by every means in its power, as a wilful aggression upon its rights and interests," the taking by Great Britain of any lands that the commission assigned to Venezuela.

"I was thunderstruck," Godkin wrote Charles Eliot Norton. He described the week that followed as "the most anxious I have known in my career." For the first three days the United States seemed to rise in unanimous support of Cleveland. Republican newspapers like the *Tribune,* which had never said a good word for him, rushed to his assistance. The editor saw so much jingoism among even intelligent people, he said, "that the prospect which seemed to open itself before me was a long fight against a half-crazed public, under a load of abuse, and the discredit of foreign birth, etc., etc."; but he never hesitated.

The first afternoon there was time to write only a paragraph editorial expressing consternation at the doctrine that the United States should "assert such ownership of the American hemisphere as will enable us to trace all the boundary lines on it to our own satisfaction in defiance of the rest of the world." On the second day the *Evening Post* devoted both its column editorials to the subject. The first, "Mr. Cleveland's Coup d'Etat," drew a striking contrast between war, with all it involved of suffering, loss, and moral deterioration, and the triviality of the possible cause, a wrangle about an obscure boundary line. The second reviewed the Venezuela correspondence, and attempting to refute Cleveland's arguments, said that his message "humiliates us by its self-contradictions," and characterized his proposal for a boundary commission as "ludicrously insulting and illogical."

In later issues the *Evening Post* mingled invective with calm, sound argument. It tried to show that Salisbury's claims in British Guiana had been, in the main, supported by incontestable evidence. It traced the history of our relations with Venezuela, and demonstrated that the little republic had missed few opportunities to treat us insolently. It declared that a commission of inquiry might be proper, but that it was indefensible to create one as a hostile proceeding, with a threat of war behind it. Months earlier, during the Nicaragua dispute, the *Evening Post* had issued in pamphlet form an essay by John

Bassett Moore upon the Monroe Doctrine, showing that it gave the United States no right of interference in such affairs, and this it now sold in large quantities. Godkin unfortunately prejudiced his case by two errors—he failed to allow for the strong sentiment of most Americans in favor of a flexible interpretation of the Doctrine, and he unjustly hinted that Cleveland was eyeing a third term.

But the editor's fears that he would stand alone were at once dissipated. The *World* lost no time in denouncing the belligerent message as "A Great Blunder," and so did the *Journal of Commerce*. Among prominent Democratic newspapers which took their stand with the *Evening Post* were the Charleston *News and Courier*, Wilmington *Every Evening*, Memphis *Commercial*, and Louisville *Post*. The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* summed up the view of a multitude of thoughtful men in a little jest: "*Teacher:*—Johnny, now tell us what we learn from the Monroe Doctrine. *Johnny:*—That the other fellow's wrong." Prof. J. W. Burgess of Columbia contributed to the *Evening Post* a column article, in which he said: "On the whole, I have never read a more arrogant demand than that now set up by President Cleveland and Secretary Olney, in all diplomatic history." Half a dozen times in the next fortnight the *Post* filled one or two columns with letters of congratulation and support. Its circulation rose materially. "In fact," wrote Godkin when it was all over, with a touch of his eternal irony, "our course has proved the greatest success I have ever had and ever known in journalism."

As every one knows, Lord Salisbury finally accepted arbitration, and the result was that the British obtained practically all the territory for which they had contended. The peaceful ending of the episode, and the gratification of the public over the President's assertion of the national dignity, as most men viewed it, left Cleveland with increased prestige. The editors of the *Evening Post* never changed their opinion, but the incident, of course, did not materially shake their esteem of Cleveland. When

he went out of office, the newspaper reviewed his eight years as the most satisfactory since the Civil War, praised his plain speech, courage, and honesty highly, and declared that he had made "a deeper mark upon the history of his time than any save the greatest of his predecessors."

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

GODKIN'S WAR WITHOUT QUARTER UPON TAMMANY

WHEN William Dean Howells summed up Mr. Godkin's career, he wrote that, influential as were his discussions of national and international issues, his greatest reputation was won by his assaults upon the indecent corruption of the government of New York city. "For a long series of years he cried aloud and spared not; his burning wit, his crushing invective, his biting sarcasm, his amusing irony, his pitiless logic, were all devoted to the extermination of the rascality by nature and rascals by name who misruled that hapless city, where they indeed afterwards changed their name but not their nature." In this contest, Howells believed, he became "not only a great New York journalist, but distinctively the greatest, since he was more singly devoted to civic affairs than any other great New York journalist ever was." The only contemporary editor whose prominence equaled his own, Charles A. Dana, aligned himself for the most part upon the Tammany side.

Howells thought that the editor wore himself out while apparently accomplishing little, because the people tired of the contest before he did. But Mr. Godkin had the pleasure in 1895 of writing the preface to a volume called "The Triumph of Reform," which really chronicled a temporary triumph—that following the Lexow investigation; while he powerfully aided in the slow arousal of the public conscience which has made each renewal of the city's misgovernment a little less bad. He enjoyed the struggle, as he enjoyed all hot fighting, an unusual number of amusing episodes gave zest to it, and there is no evidence that he felt discouraged at the end.

When in 1884 Godkin first began treating municipal affairs in the *Evening Post* with his usual aggressive style,

the city had biennial elections and the certainty that a Democratic Mayor would always be chosen. None but a Democrat had been elected since 1872, and none was to be elected until 1894, a state of things which a number of Republican bosslets — "Johnny" O'Brien, "Mike" Cregan, "Barney" Biglin, "Jake" Hess, and "Steve" French—regarded with complacency because they shared the Tammany pickings. The essential question was always whether the Mayor should be a Tammany Democrat or a Democrat representing the reform wing (the County Democracy), and in the determination of this the willingness or unwillingness of the Republican rank and file to join hands with the reform Democrats was always a leading factor. In every election in the eighties the Republican bosslets put their own ticket into the field, thus drawing the fire of non-partisan reformers like Mr. Godkin, but sometimes the majority of Republicans could be brought behind what was really a coalition nomination.

At the outset, in 1884, occurred one of the most gratifying surprises in the whole history of New York politics—the election of William R. Grace, a reform Democrat, over the Tammany candidate, a disreputable politician named Hugh J. Grant. The victory was the more unexpected because it was generally believed that John Kelly, the Tammany chieftain who had succeeded Tweed, had made an infamous compact with the Blaine Republicans, by which they were to trade votes and give the State to Blaine and the city to Grant. Kelly had always disliked Cleveland. Just before the election Thomas A. Hendricks, who was running for the Vice-Presidency with Cleveland, made a thousand-mile journey from Indiana to hold a protracted night conference with Kelly, and many have held that he succeeded in winning him over to support the national ticket. But Godkin refused to accept this explanation of the result. Kelly had failed to deliver the vote, he wrote, because Grace was an honored Catholic who drew many Irish Democrats away from Grant, while Republicans by thousands had voted for Blaine and Grace when they were expected to vote for

Blaine and Grant. Kelly, though the most stolid of men, was confined to his house for weeks by nervous depression, and soon retired. His downfall inspired Godkin to utter a prophecy which time, bringing Richard Croker to the front, partly belied:

> We doubt if the city will ever again be afflicted with a boss who will be Kelly's equal in ability and power. There will, of course, be other bosses, but they will be of a different kind. They must possess qualities which will enable them to rule under the new conditions which will prevail after Jan. 1 next. Kelly succeeded Tweed, and for a time was almost his equal in power, but he was a different boss from Tweed. He was never personally corrupt. He arranged "fat things for the boys," and put into our local offices and into the Legislature about the worst succession of political speculators and strikers that the city has ever been called upon to endure. He stole nothing himself, but he enabled others to steal with great freedom. His power rested mainly upon his standing as a good Catholic. Connected by marriage with the very head of the church in this country, he was able to command that blind obedience of his followers which exists only within the pale of the church. . . . He had a lecture upon some topic of church interest which he delivered in aid of all kinds of the Church's charities. . . .

Two years later another happy ending crowned the famous three-cornered campaign between Theodore Roosevelt (Rep.), Henry George (Labor), and Abram S. Hewitt (United Democrat)—the choice of Hewitt. The *Evening Post* was surprised when Tammany joined with the County Democracy behind Hewitt, a man of the highest reputation. The *Times* and *Tribune* supported Roosevelt, but Mr. Godkin contended that he could not be elected, and that every vote for him simply gave a larger chance of victory to Henry George. He was justified by the result, Hewitt polling 90,552 votes, George 68,110, and Roosevelt only 60,435. In 1884 the *Post* had first published a "Voters' Directory," short biographical sketches of the candidates, and its characterizations of the three party leaders this autumn are still of interest:

ABRAM S. HEWITT (United Dem.)—Has served continuously in Congress, with the exception of one term, since 1874; is a large iron manufacturer, and is distinguished for his generous dealing with his employees; is a high authority upon politico-economic subjects, and a thoroughly trained public man in all respects; declares that he was nominated without pledges. . . .

THEODORE ROOSEVELT (Rep.)—Is twenty-eight years of age; served three terms in the Assembly, where he was of great service in securing reform legislation for this city; it was through his labors at the head of a committee of investigation that the "fee system" was abolished and other evils exposed and corrected; he went to the Chicago Convention openly and strongly opposed to Mr. Blaine's nomination because of his bad personal record, but subsequently consented to support him.

HENRY GEORGE (Labor.)—Is best known as the author of "Progress and Poverty," of which the leading idea is that all property should be confiscated by the State through the taxing power, without compensation to the owners; is the candidate of Socialists, boycotters, etc.; has declared since his nomination that if he were elected "there would be no more policemen acting as censors," that he "will loosen the bonds of the police and make them servants of the people"; that the horse cars "ought to be as free as air" to the public; and that the "French Revolution is about to repeat itself here."

Unfortunately, in 1888 Hewitt was defeated by the old Tammany favorite, "Hughie" Grant, and the corruptionists returned to their former power and spoils. Worst of all, Grant's election was accepted without alarm, and even with satisfaction, by the educated classes. The new Mayor, an ignorant and unprincipled son of a saloonkeeper, was given "social recognition," asked to dinner in the best circles, and opened a ball with Mrs. Astor. When he said, "If I don't prove a good Mayor, it will be because I don't know how," this remark was repeated as if it were a gem of aphoristic wisdom. *Harper's Weekly*, which with the help of the cartoonist Nast had done so much to drive Tweed from power, yielded to this folly, and (July 13, 1889) published a long article extolling a "New Tammany," with high aims, which it said was governed by a "big four" consisting of Richard

Croker, Mayor Grant, Thomas F. Gilroy, and Bourke Cockran. The article declared that Croker was pre-eminent for "his political sagacity, political honesty, great knowledge of individuals, and spotless personal integrity." It described Grant as "well-educated," "shrewd and far-seeing," remarkable for "personal honesty and trustworthiness," and "entirely fearless." Gilroy was praised as "a genial, pleasant, obliging man," who was "remarkably gifted with business ability." In short, the brilliancy and integrity of Tammany were pictured as startling.

Every one at the time was thinking of the projected World Columbian Exposition, and many New Yorkers were bent upon making Central Park or some other part of the city its site. Mayor Grant lost no opportunity to increase his prestige by frequent conferences upon the subject with admiring business men.

Watching this madness with disgust, as the year 1890 —that of another city election—opened, the *Evening Post* resolved to make a stand against it even if it had to do so single-handed. It had never ceased to maintain that Mayor Grant was illiterate, that all his associations from youth up had been low, that his administration as sheriff had been so loose and corrupt that a grand jury had rebuked it by a scathing presentment, and that his appointments had been wretched. The men he put in office were of the worst Tammany type. Moreover, it ridiculed the idea that there could be a "New Tammany," arguing that the character of the organization made it impossible for it to change without committing suicide; that it necessarily drew its support from the criminal and semi-criminal population of the city, and from levies upon vice, so that if this were cut off it would wither. "The society," wrote Godkin, "is simply an organization of clever adventurers, most of them in some degree criminal, for the control of the ignorant and vicious vote of the city in an attack upon the property of the taxpayers. There is not a particle of politics in the concern any more than in any combination of Western brigands to 'hold up' a railroad

train and get the express packages. Its sole object is plunder in any form which will not attract immediate notice from the police."

How could this fact be pressed home to the consciousness of the citizens? Mr. Godkin, Horace White, Joseph Bucklin Bishop, and the managing editor resolved upon a thorough-going biographical exposure of the real character of the men who constituted Tammany. They felt that while decent New Yorkers knew in a general way that some of the district leaders and their henchmen were low in character and morals, they did not appreciate just how noisome was the gulf of boodle, vice, ignorance, and crime out of which these men emerged. They determined to probe that gulf, to give the city a whiff of its fumes, and to show how the Tammany organizers reeked with its slime.

On April 3, 1890, therefore, the *Evening Post* published in nine columns of close print biographical sketches of the twenty-seven members of the Tammany Executive Committee, including the "big four" of the "New Tammany." This document, which in ensuing months sold in tens of thousands of copies as a pamphlet, is a permanently valuable contribution to New York's political and social history. It abounds in a miscellany of roguery rich enough to outfit a picaresque novelist. At the head of the list came Mayor Grant, whom the *Post* accused of dividing, while sheriff, illegal fees with an auctioneer aggregating $42,497, and of taking illegal "extra compensation" fees. Under the name of John Scannell, the *Post* printed details of the murder which this district leader had committed in a basement poolroom, and showed how he had planned it for two years, though he was acquitted on the ground of "emotional insanity." Another district leader was shown to be an accused murderer, and several more to have committed notoriously brutal assaults. A scandal in certain asphalt contracts let by Thomas F. Gilroy, now the Commissioner of Public Works, had already been exposed by the *Post*, and the facts were repeated. Several committeemen were declared at one time

to have received stolen goods, and several more to have kept disorderly houses. The newspaper described a saloon once kept by "Barney" Martin, one of Grant's appointees, as the resort for the most distinguished professors of the art of acquiring other people's property in the country.

Written with sparkle and gusto, these biographical sketches abound in interesting anecdotes. The biography of "Georgie" Plunkett tells us that a friend remarked: "You say Georgie is rich? He ought to be; he never missed an opportunity." We are told that H. D. Purroy's secessionist element in Tammany was known as the Hoy Purroy. The sketch of John Reilly states that he had been nominated for Assistant Alderman while still living in Ireland, through the efforts of "me brother Barney," a Manhattan saloonkeeper. It was recalled that when a protest had been made to Sheriff Grant by his friends against the appointment of "Barney" Martin to some post, Grant had made an indignant reply: "What do youse fellows want? Do you want to break up the organization?" Summing up, the *Evening Post* listed the Executive Committee as follows:

> Professional politicians, 27; convicted murderer, 1; acquitted of murder, 1; convicted of felonious assault, 1; professional gamblers, 4; former dive-keepers, 5; liquor dealers, 4; former liquor-dealers, 5; sons of liquor-dealers, 3; former pugilists, 3; former toughs, 4; members of Tweed gang, 6; officeholders, 17.

The sensation produced by this publication was profound. Within a few days the *Evening Post* reprinted delighted comments from half of the important newspapers of the East. As for Tammany, its disturbance and outcry led Godkin to compare the inquiry by the newspaper with the introduction of a ferret into a cellar. You knew the rats were there, but until the ferret appeared you didn't know where. "When they become aware of his presence out they scuttle, from the coal hole, the ash barrel, the garbage can, the woodpile, brown and black, big and little, squealing and showing their teeth." The

three things a Tammany leader most dreaded, he concluded, were, in the ascending order of repulsiveness, the penitentiary, honest industry, and biography.

Immediately two of the men favored with biographies began suits for criminal libel. One was "Barney" Martin, the other Judge "Pete" Mitchel, who had been described by the *Evening Post* as a "nominal" lawyer, a "thug," a "tough," and a one-time adviser in a keno game. Bourke Cockran, their voluble attorney, known for his eloquence as the Tammany Chrysostom, began what Godkin called "a minatory flux like the rush of Croton through a water-gate." The *Evening Post's* answer to the libel suits was to add two more counts to its charges against "Pete" Mitchel, saying that at one time he had received stolen goods and at another had been a partner in a rum-shop with a murderer named Sharkey. Within a week (April 29) the grand jury dismissed the two suits against the *Post,* evidence of the unassailable solidity of its charges. Once more there was an outburst of congratulation from the press of the country, the paper in one issue reprinting editorials from other journals in Boston, Pittsfield, Springfield, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Portland, Me., and Milwaukee.

While these suits were pending (one was soon after revived, and four in all were vainly brought) Tammany did its utmost to make them an annoyance to Mr. Godkin, serving summons after summons at the most inconvenient hours possible. He was arrested three times in one day, to the great delight of Dana. But only once did his persecutors really succeed in vexing him. A policeman came with a summons at an early hour one Sunday morning, when Mr. Godkin was looking after the welfare of some guests. With characteristic impulsiveness, he gave the officer $5 to leave and come back a little later. His enemies at once saw their opportunity. Godkin the reformer bribing an officer of the law to evade arrest! Next morning, when he came down to work and found his associates somewhat staggered by the printed reports, he was puzzled, and did not really understand the situation

until he lunched with some other reform workers at noon. But of course an explanation was easily given the public.

The *Evening Post* hastened to follow up its first biographies with an exposure of the Tammany Committee on Organization, numbering 1,070 members, of whom it found 161 to be rumsellers, 133 criminal rumsellers (that is, open after hours or on Sundays), and 235 without specified occupation or not in the city directory, a suspicious circumstance, since professional gamblers never had an assigned occupation. In the weeks just before election there was published a searching examination of the Tammany General Committee, numbering 4,564 men, of whom no fewer than 654 were rumsellers, 565 criminal rumsellers, and 1,266 not in the directory, most of them for good reasons. Detailed biographies of the most despicable committeemen were printed, of which one of the shortest may be extracted:

ELEVENTH DISTRICT.—Classed among the rumsellers of this district is August Heckler, familiarly known as "Gus." While the nominal proprietor of the rumshop called "The Bohemia" at No. 1257 Broadway, he recently obtained much notoriety by turning the upper stories of the building into what for the sake of decency is called by him a hotel. For this his liquor license was taken away, and so far as can be learned there are now no intoxicating liquors sold on the premises. The hotel, which is a most disorderly house, still flourishes, however, while Heckler is "on the road" selling a brand of champagne. Technically, Heckler cannot be classed among the criminal rumsellers; yet he is a good deal worse than most of them.

Heckler made a personal call upon Mr. Godkin, and assured him that his hotel was respectable, whereupon the editor called in the efficient reporters who gathered material for the biographies, and proved that it was not.

So far as that fall's election went, the *Evening Post's* labors were in vain. Because 30,000 registered Republicans, jealous of the reform Democrats, stayed from the polls, Mayor Grant beat the anti-Tammany nominee, Francis M. Scott, by a vote of 116,000 to 94,000. Not only that, but two years later, in 1892, Thomas F. Gilroy,

called "a business candidate," was easily elected to succeed Grant. Before his term was well advanced it was generally admitted that Tammany had become so well entrenched behind the offices that it would be useless to elect a reform Mayor without legislation which would enable him to dismiss nearly all the city officials.

Nevertheless, the spade-work of Mr. Godkin had been so well done that the idea of a "New Tammany" was now laughed at, and the organization was regarded with thorough suspicion by decent elements. His campaign in 1890 brought him letters from Eastman Johnson, Bishop Potter, S. G. Ward, Charles Loring Brace, Gen. Wm. F. Smith, and other public-spirited men. The city began to awake. Other newspapers, notably the *World* early in 1894, imitated the *Post* by publishing Tammany biographies which stung the grafters to the quick. On April 4, 1892, the City Club was organized with a Board of Trustees which included men deeply interested in the reformation of the city government, the most prominent being James C. Carter, R. Fulton Cutting, W. Bayard Cutting, August Belmont, and William J. Schieffelin. With the special encouragement of the City Club, more than two-score local Good Government Clubs were shortly founded (Carl Schurz helped establish one among the German-Americans) and although Dana of the *Sun* contemptuously nicknamed them "Goo-Goos," they exerted an important educational influence. There was ample basis for suspicion of the city rulers under both Grant and Gilroy. Mayor Grant had sworn in 1888 that two years earlier Croker was "very poor indeed." But by the end of 1893 he had invested $250,000 in a stock-farm, $103,000 in race-horses, $80,000 in a Fifth Avenue mansion, and drove about in carriages costing $1,700. The *Post* further stated that Croker paid $12,000 a year to a jockey, and $5,000 to the manager of his stock farm, and that on a trip to the Pacific Coast early in 1894 he made the journey in a private car costing $50 a day. Where did he get the money? Godkin harped continually upon the outrageous appointments made under both

Mayors. Thus when in December, 1890, Patrick Divver was appointed a police justice at $8,000 a year, the *Post* reprinted his biography:

PATRICK DIVVER.—Commonly called "Paddy," is the Tammany leader in the Second Assembly District. He is the keeper of a sailors' boarding house, and is the proprietor, or has interests, in several liquor saloons. He is an ex-member of the Board of Aldermen, a race-track frequenter, and the friend and confidant of gamblers. He is on terms of intimacy with "Johnny" Matthews and "Jake" Shipsey, two members of the sporting and gambling fraternity, whose particular methods of gaining a livelihood are unknown to the frequenters of Paddy Divver's and other rumshops on Park Row, where they are generally to be found.

Within three years, said the *Post* in 1894, Divver was reputed to be worth $200,000. Among the many other unfit appointments were those of "Barney" Martin, "Joe" Koch, and "Tom" Graham to the police courts, and of "Mike" Daly, John J. Scannell, and "Andy" White to important municipal offices. In 1892-93 the *Evening Post, Times,* and *World* repeatedly challenged the methods of conducting the public business in the Building Department, Dock Department, and Street Cleaning Bureau, and in the latter part of 1893 the City Club began collecting evidence of corruption from top to bottom in the Police Department. This corruption, indeed, was almost a matter of common knowledge, for repeated charges were made against police captains, and the bipartisan Police Commission of four shielded the men in the most audacious way. The insurrection of virtue, as Theodore Roosevelt called it, reached a head during 1892-1893 in the charges of Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, minister of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, that the police system was battening upon an extensive blackmail system. The response was immediate; business men and others came to Dr. Parkhurst with evidence that was incontestable; the City Club began demanding an investigation by the Legislature; and *Harper's Weekly,* which had defended Tammany a few years earlier, published early in

January, 1894, a cartoon which recalled Nast in the Tweed days. Entitled "Tammany's Tax on Crime," it showed a line of saloon-keepers, criminals and prostitutes passing before a cashier's desk in which stood the dummy figure of a policeman, with Boss Croker crouching behind it and stretching forth his hand for the "contributions." From the public uproar grew the Lexow Inquiry.

For Mr. Clarence Lexow, the Senator who offered at Albany the resolution for an investigating committee and became its chairman, the *Evening Post* had no respect. It called him "a young country lawyer of very moderate abilities residing at Nyack, N. Y., and dabbling more or less in politics under the guidance of the rather mediocre understanding of Mr. T. C. Platt," and it believed his interest in the inquiry was as lukewarm as Platt's own. But it earnestly supported the movement for the inquiry, was disappointed when the committee failed to secure Choate for counsel, and, when Gov. Flower vetoed the appropriation of $25,000 for its work on the ground that it was a partisan body, said that it knew no precedent for such a gross abuse of the executive power save Gov. Hill's veto of the appropriation for the similar Fassett Committee. The State Chamber of Commerce came to the rescue by advancing $17,500 to cover the committee's expenses, and John W. Goff, assisted by Frank Moss and Wm. Travers Jerome, proved an admirable counsel.

By the middle of June, 1894, the inquiry had driven one of the four Police Commissioners, John McClave, to resignation and flight. It had been disclosed that the police force had a well-determined tariff of charges for its protection of various criminal trades and practices within the city. Each disorderly house was expected to pay an "initiation fee" of $500 to every new police captain placed in charge of the district, and $50 a month thereafter, besides a contribution to the captain's "Christmas present." One keeper of such a house testified that he had been charged $750 within three months. Concert saloons, without a city license, had to pay $50 a month to the captain, while the regular tariff for saloons em-

ploying waitresses, and operating without a license, ran from $15 to $25 a month. It is not surprising that the fact was elicited that one captain had paid $15,000 for appointment to his post. For the privilege of selling on Sunday all saloons regularly paid the ward men—the name then given a petty officer—$5. Whenever the inspector of the excise department found a saloon without a city license, he got $5 for overlooking the fact. Tickets to Tammany "chowder parties," usually distributed among disorderly houses and saloons in blocks of five, were $5 each, and it was gross bad manners to send any back. The push-cart men were expected to pay $3 a week from their pitiful earnings, and the ward-men had miscellaneous sources of tribute which made an appointment to the force worth $300.

Every steamship line landing cargoes at the port had to pay heavy blackmail charges at every stage of its business, and to every official—police, dock, and custom-house—connected with Tammany. The agent of the French Line displayed pitiable embarrassment when called upon to explain an item of $500 *"payés a qui le droit."* All merchants who wished to use the sidewalks to display or handle goods paid $25 to $50 annually, it being customary to put this in an envelope and leave it somewhere to be called for. Men who rented their premises for polling booths had to divide the money with the police. But much worse than such grafting as this was the evidence that the police, instead of repressing pure criminality, were actually encouraging it as a source of revenue. Thus green-goods swindlers were allowed to do business on payment of $50 a month to the police captain, policy-gamblers had the same privilege, and receivers of stolen goods shared with the detectives. As a climax, to quote the *Post*, "Mr. Goff showed us a police justice sitting on the bench, and not merely shielding a regular practitioner of abortion from punishment, but conniving with him in his guilt."

The news pages, following the inquiry closely, showed

how the early bravado of the police force changed within a few weeks to panic:

That which has altered the feelings of the police [wrote a reporter June 16] is the fact that the committee has entered recesses of the corruption system which were believed to be unapproachable. So long as the despised lowest class of criminals was the one drawn upon for witnesses, there was felt little alarm. It was reasoned that the records of the persons sworn would crush the force of their testimony. . . . But when the "better class" women and the professional criminal, like George Appo, began to squeal, danger was foreseen. Women in the "tenderloin" and other more pretentious districts have been treated fairly from a police standpoint. Where they have paid for protection they got it, or, according to the blackmailers, are supposed to have received it. If there was any abuse of the police power it was not authorized, and must have been the indiscretion of the wardman or the individual patrolman. It was meant that the "ladies," as they are uniformly called, should be justly and squarely dealt with. Anyway, it is a shock to the guilty to learn that women like "Eva Bell," who has been protected for years in Thirty-sixth Street, should give the game away and peach as she did on Friday.

Worse than the fickleness of the women is the weakening of the criminal and the gambler to the men who watch such lines of defense give way. Appo, it is said, however, has been ill-treated, has a grievance, and these are taken in account as reasons for his having "thrown down" his fellows.

Mr. Godkin insisted that the source of the corruption was in the higher ranks of the Tammany hierarchy, and in the impracticable administration of the police by a bipartisan board of four instead of a single Commissioner. The reporters declared that the best elements of the force also held its heads to blame:

These men complain chiefly that the political phase of the matter is not more urgently bored into. They say that the conduct of the commissioners for years has been such as to poison a patrolman from the time he first applies for admission to the force. The payment for appointment, the reputation of the politicians in the Board, the uses made of him by his executive superiors in their private schemes, and by the Commissioners, directly and indirectly, for their partisan purposes, together with the general moral tone

of the force and the work, all tend to teach him how he is to do for himself when he can. There . . . is daily disappointment that the higher evils are not kept in view.

So far as immediate remedial legislation was concerned, the Lexow inquiry produced less effect than had been hoped. Boss Platt controlled the Republican Legislature, and had a strong influence upon Gov. Levi P. Morton, who succeeded Flower; and Platt declared that to put the police under a single Commissioner would be "revolution." When the Committee made its report in January, 1895, the *Evening Post* joined with Dr. Parkhurst in ridiculing its recommendations, which included retention of the bipartisan, four-headed Police Commission. Godkin drew a scathing picture of Lexow as he "sneaked off to Platt's express office, and engaged in a dirty little intrigue for the defeat of the reform movement, and tossed his little head in the air and sniffed at all the leading men in the city, and abused reformers in general, and went to work under Platt's direction to concoct a few little bills to secure for Platt a few little offices." The Legislature refused to put the police under a single head. It passed enactments making possible the reformation of the police court bench, and the reorganization of the public school system, but in other fields in which the reformers had expected changes it refused to act.

The real triumph of reform came in the municipal election in 1894. Tammany, trying to brazen out the Lexow revelations, first nominated Nathan Straus, one of the worst Park Commissioners the city ever had, the chief abettor in 1892 of a scheme to ruin Central Park by putting a race-track in it; but he declined, and the nomination was given "Hughie" Grant, who had begun the process of filling the city offices with the criminals and semi-criminals who adorned them. The reform Democrats and reform Republicans held a meeting in Madison Square Garden and selected a Committee of Seventy to conduct their campaign, this body nominating

William M. Strong for Mayor and John W. Goff for Recorder. Its choice struck the *Evening Post* as admirable, not only because Strong was a man of high character, a successful citizen, and well known to the public, but because he was a Republican. The next Governor and Legislature, wrote Godkin, with accurate anticipation of the fact, would be Republican, and while a Republican administration in New York city might not be able to get from Gov. Morton and Boss Platt all that was desired, they would certainly get more than any Democrat. "A Democratic Mayor would probably not be allowed to make a single removal or appointment except such as came to him under the present Charter, and we should continue to wallow in our present quagmire until the next Presidential election, and then might well bid farewell to all thought of city reform." Decent citizens this time were fully aroused. They went to the polls in such numbers that, although Tammany mustered 108,000 votes, Strong and Goff had a majority of over 45,000. It was an impressive demonstration, wrote Mr. Godkin, of the power of non-partisanship:

> The Committee of Seventy have shown, more conspicuously than ever before, the power which, even in this city of many nationalities and creeds, lies in the union of good people. We believe the Good Government clubs are doing invaluable work in turning the lesson to account. They are spreading the non-partisan (not bi-partisan) view of city affairs. It is especially important that they should hammer it into the brains of the young, for the men who have conducted this campaign against Tammany will be gone from the stage in twenty years, as the men of 1871 are now, and in about twenty years Tammany regains its old strength. Tammany will surely come again, unless young and old get into the way of looking at the city as they look at their bank, and think no more about the Mayor's politics than they think about the politics of the cashier who keeps their accounts. All the well-governed cities of the world are governed on this business plan, all the badly governed on the other.
>
> The plan of going down among the rank and file of Tammany with books and pamphlets, and University Settlements, and popular lectures, we know has merit. It is a work of humanity and

civilization which is always in order. But they deceive themselves who think the city can be saved by any such missionary work. What Tammany offers to the ignorant and poor is always something more palpable and succulent than enlightenment, or free reading rooms, or cheap coffee. It can never be met and vanquished except by union among the honest, industrious, and intelligent. These are now in a majority and have always been in a majority. A great commercial city like New York could not exist and prosper if they were not in a majority. Whenever they cease to be in a majority, capital and labor will both begin to move away from Manhattan Island.

The splendid achievements of Mayor Strong's reform administration need not be rehearsed in detail. Col. George E. Waring was appointed head of the Street Cleaning Department, and before he had been at work a fortnight the *Evening Post* commented on the change he had wrought. When people saw gangs of able-bodied sweepers and shovelers working like Trojans under bosses, instead of groups of infirm and decrepit creatures leaning upon their implements and talking politics, they rubbed their eyes. Snow actually vanished over night; trucks were no longer stabled in the streets to shelter vice; and the accidents to horses from nails and rubbish strikingly diminished. Waring's most competent predecessor had cleaned 53 miles of street daily in 1888, whereas Waring cleaned 433 miles from once to five times daily. Theodore Roosevelt was made President of the Police Commission, with results familiar to every one. A new Board of Education, after failing to procure President Daniel Coit Gilman of Johns Hopkins, chose William H. Maxwell to be the energetic Superintendent of the Schools; while in Mayor Strong's first year fourteen new school buildings were finished, and the salaries of teachers were materially raised. The police courts were reorganized, the Mayor taking pains to choose the best magistrates available. The City College, cramped into small quarters on Twenty-third Street, was given an adequate site on the heights overlooking Harlem, the

Metropolitan Museum was enlarged, bridges were built over the Harlem, and the parks were much more carefully tended. The administration made blunders, but it was one of the best New York has ever had.

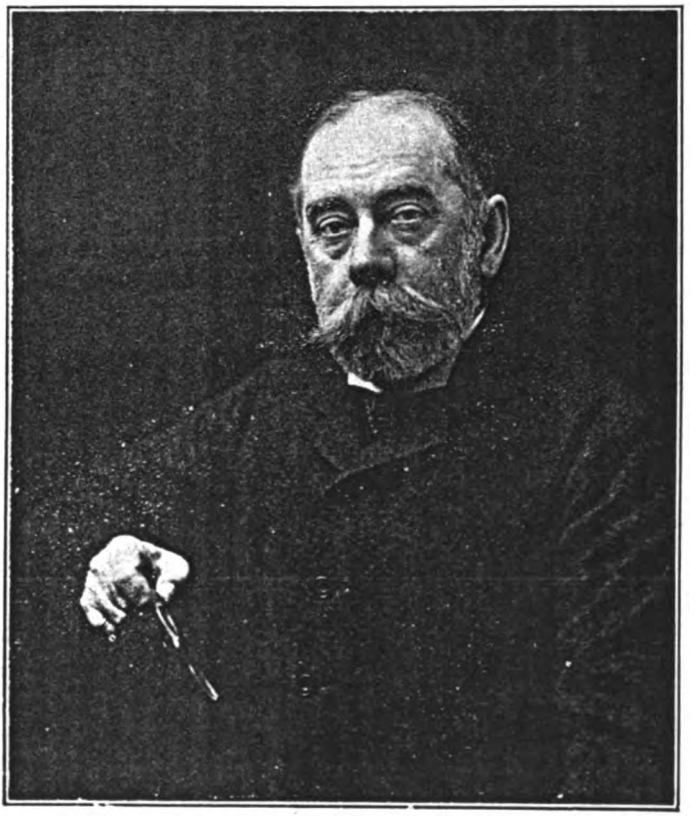
For this great revolt of 1894 and its fruits, Mr. Godkin gave equal credit to the foolish audacity of the Tammany yahoos and "the persistence and pluck with which Dr. Parkhurst stuck to the police. It was his splendid bulldog obstinacy in holding on to them which really made the first clear impression on the public mind." Dr. Parkhurst will always remain the hero of the uprising. But many who were foremost in the struggle thought at the time that Godkin himself should be bracketed with the fighting pastor, and publicly or privately said so. Dr. Parkhurst just after the election expressed his warm gratitude to the editor. This was all very well, wrote Col. George E. Waring; "but Parkhurst don't know, as do those who have watched your course during all the years of your work here, to what an extent you alone are to be credited with the maintaining, among the leaders of the community, of the spirit which at last made Parkhurst and his work possible. I have known in my short life no equal example of persistent, vigorous, aggressive virtue receiving the reward of such crowning success." Frederick Keppel wrote in the same terms: "Both Dr. Parkhurst and Mr. Goff deserve the public honors that have been heaped upon them; but long before these gentlemen were ever publicly heard of (and unfalteringly ever since) your journal has fought against corruption and wrong with a power and vigor which certainly has done more than any other single influence to bring about the magnificent result of last election day." Wayne MacVeagh and President Gilman expressed themselves with equal enthusiasm. Dr. W. R. Huntington suggested statues to Dr. Parkhurst and Mr. Godkin overlooking Tammany Hall.

The strength of this sentiment led a month after the election to the presentation to Mr. Godkin of a loving

cup, the speech on the occasion being delivered by Bishop Henry C. Potter. The subscription was made by a list of women, and the cup testified to their "grateful recognition of fearless and unfaltering services to the city of New York."

The two chief municipal issues in which Godkin was interested after 1894, the creation of Greater New York under a charter drafted in 1896, and the election of its first Mayor in 1897, both resulted in defeats for his views. He opposed consolidation as premature. His belief was that if the separate governments of New York and Brooklyn were both corrupt, as they had been with few intermissions for a long generation, their union would simply present a harder problem for reformers, and fatter jobs and more boodle for the bosses. Moreover, he knew that the guiding hand in the formation of a Charter Commission and the legislative approval of its work would be Platt's. But the Platt and Croker machines agreed in supporting the consolidation programme, and many of the reform element stood behind it, so that it was easily made effective. The result of the ensuing mayoralty campaign of 1897 was not long in doubt. On the Tammany side there was one candidate, Robert Van Wyck, and opposing him there appeared three. The Citizens' Union was formed that spring, and its efforts led to the nomination of Seth Low, well known as successively Mayor of Brooklyn and President of Columbia University—an admirable choice; the Platt Republicans nominated Gen. B. F. Tracy; and the Bryan Democrats put forward Henry George. Van Wyck received 233,997 votes, while Low, his nearest rival, obtained only 151,540.

This result seemed a stunning reaction from the great victory of 1894. Van Wyck made a clean sweep of Mayor Strong's efficient departmental heads, and when Devery became chief of police the city ran "wide open." Yet in the moment of defeat Godkin did not lose heart, pointing out that Van Wyck's three antagonists combined



E. L. Godkin

Associate Editor 1881-1883, Editor-in-Chief 1883-1899.

had a larger vote than he. "Four years is a long time to wait, undoubtedly, for another attack on Tammany," the *Post* said, "but in those four years Tammany will be furnishing us with plenty of ammunition, and Republicans will be seeing and thinking, and the Citizens' Union will be learning how to fight."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

FREE SILVER, THE SPANISH WAR, AND IMPERIALISM

THE three great final battles of Godkin's editorship were those against the free silver craze, the Spanish War, and the retention of the Philippines. The first was decisively won, but the decisive loss of the other two cast a shadow over Mr. Godkin's last days. "American ideals were the intellectual food of my youth, and to see America converted into a senseless, Old World conqueror, embitters my age," he wrote a friend in May, 1899. In all three struggles the *Evening Post* took the same aggressive leadership as in the Mugwump campaigns against Blaine and in Godkin's fifteen years of war upon Tammany.

The portents of the free silver uprising first became alarming to the *Evening Post* in 1890. The Sherman Silver Purchase Act of that year it roundly attacked, and Horace White and the other editors always regarded it as the chief cause of the panic of 1893. As he pointed out, it added nearly $200,000,000 to the fiat money of the country, alarmed men at home and abroad regarding the ability of the United States to redeem its obligations in gold upon demand, caused the steady withdrawal of capital from the country, and decreased business confidence and increased money rates until failures took place on every hand. The *Post's* detestation of the Sherman Act was increased by the fact that it was passed by a nefarious combination of silver men and supporters of the McKinley Tariff, a measure which the *Post* equally abominated. For some years in the nineties the silver danger seemed the greater because Republicans flirted with it as coyly as Democrats. In 1894 both Speaker Reed and Senator Lodge proposed to force silver upon the world by high discriminating tariffs against nations

which refused to adopt bimetallism. Lodge, in fact, left the *Evening Post* aghast by introducing a demagogic resolution in the Senate for applying this policy against England.

Late in 1894 the reception given "Coin's Financial School" showed how irresistibly the free silver question was thrusting itself into the political foreground. This famous pamphlet, by W. H. Harvey, related how a "smooth little financier" of Chicago named Coin, struck by the rural distress and business depression, opened a school of finance in the Art Institute in May, 1894. His lectures and colloquies continued six days. At first only young men were present, but the audience increased until it included statesmen, professors, bank presidents, and others of note, many of them—as Lyman J. Gage and J. Laurence Laughlin—designated by name. When they interrupted Coin, he quickly silenced them by his incisive logic and superior knowledge. In the end, completely converted, the company tendered him a glittering reception at the Palmer House. The pamphlet was illustrated by coarse woodcuts. One showed silver a beautiful woman decapitated by her enemies; another depicted America as a cow which the farmers were laboriously feeding while a fat capitalist milked her; a third represented the gold standard by a man hobbling on one leg. Coin had made the utmost of his ability to ask the questions as well as answer them. As Horace White said, his discussion with Prof. Laughlin was equaled by nothing save the debate in Rabelais upon the question whether a chimera ruminating in a vacuum devoureth second intentions. The booklet was full of deceptive analogies. For example, when asked if Government coinage of depreciated silver would really make it worth a dollar in gold, Coin replied: "Certainly; if the Government bought 100,000 horses, wouldn't the price go up?" This retort was set off with a woodcut of a horse.

No man in the country, not even Prof. W. G. Sumner, was so well equipped to answer Coin as Horace White. The "comic publication," as the *Post* called it, would

have been unworthy of attention had its influence not been tremendous. Silver miners, mortgage-ridden farmers, small shopkeepers and workmen, were everywhere soon studying it, making its specious arguments their own, and convincing themselves that an Eastern plutocracy had committed "the crime of '73"—the demonetization of silver—in order to depress the prices of crops and labor. By March, 1895, it was impossible to ignore the booklet. In a series of twelve articles Mr. White exposed its many misstatements and fallacies. Coin asserted that silver was "demonetized secretly" in 1873, whereas the discussion had been full and open. He said that the silver dollar was the monetary unit of the United States 1792-1873, when it was actually so only from 1783 to 1792. He stated that the United States was the first nation to demonetize silver, whereas Germany had closed her mints to silver except for small coins in 1871. As for the horse-buying illustration, Mr. White showed that when in 1890 the Government began buying 4,500,000 ounces of silver each month, the price actually fell because the supply increased also. He discussed in detail the greenback question, Coin's queer delusion that the country had never been prosperous since 1873, and the supposed "English octopus" that had fastened gold upon the world. With some revision, his articles appeared early in 1895 as a pamphlet entitled "Coin's Financial Fool," and were distributed in large numbers by the Reform Club at fifteen cents a hundred.

At the beginning of 1896 the *Evening Post* welcomed the signs that a great national battle over free silver was coming. The result, it predicted, would be the same that had crowned the greenback contest. "A sharp division between those who want an honest dollar and those who do not is on all accounts to be desired," it said on April 10. "A year's discussion of the principles that enter into this question is the best possible preparation of the public mind for the presidential campaign of 1896." It knew that the sharp division would have to be a division between the two great parties. As the isolation of Cleve-

land and other gold men in the Democrat party, and the ascendancy of silverites like Bland and Tillman, became more emphatic, it frankly pinned its hopes to the Republicans.

To them it promised victory if only they refused to "straddle." An editorial of April, 1896, called "Assurance of the Gold Standard," told them that on a gold platform they could carry all the States north of Delaware and the Ohio River, and east of the Mississippi. This would give them 210 electoral votes, and the ten more needed could certainly be obtained from Iowa, the Dakotas, and the border States. Throughout May and June the *Evening Post* called upon McKinley, who was almost certain to be the nominee, to declare himself for the gold standard. He had voted for the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, and had made alarming utterances in favor of silver coinage as late as the fall of 1894; hence the editors' anxiety over his uncertain position, and their resentment of his talk of making the tariff the chief issue. But McKinley refused to commit himself. He was assured of a majority of the Republican Convention if he acted tactfully, and he had no intention of antagonizing the silver wing of his party before he won the prize. In his speeches both before and just after the convention he failed to allude to the free silver issue, while in several he emphasized the "great American doctrine of protection."

McKinley's nomination was therefore received by Godkin and his associates with hostility. Not since 1860, they wrote, had the nation so needed a man of strong character and clear views; yet the Republicans had chosen a trimmer of uncertain mental operations. The gold plank in the platform was admirable, but it simply emphasized the fact that McKinley was, at the time he was named, a total misfit. Nevertheless, Godkin tried to be optimistic:

> Nothing marks more clearly than McKinley's nomination the mistake of turning nominating conventions into vast exciting crowds, doing their work under the eyes of a larger crowd, more excited still. There can be little doubt that the gold in the plat-

form was forced on the convention by the business men, and that, had the convention been a deliberative body, McKinley's unfitness to stand on any such platform would have been recognized. But the pledges given by the delegates before they ever met or compared notes, made it impossible to choose any other. About the platform they were free, but about the candidate they were tied up, so that they were compelled to put him astride a body of doctrine with which he had never been in thorough sympathy. But the formal recognition of the doctrine by the party at least insures discussion, and encourages us to hope that there will be no more difficulty in killing the silver heresy through the country by free debate than there has been in getting such a collection of politicians as met at St. Louis to declare for the gold standard.

If the *Evening Post* was frigid toward McKinley, it was filled with angry contempt by the nomination of Bryan. He was totally unknown to the country at large; he had not even been a regular delegate to the convention; he made a windy speech to the roaring mob of repudiators which called itself the Democratic party, and was nominated because he was of the stamp of Tillman and Altgeld, with a more attractive personality—so ran its verdict. The decadence of the great party of Jackson, Benton, Tilden, and Cleveland seemed to it confirmed by the platform, which Horace White pronounced "baser than anything ever avowed heretofore by a political party in this country outside of the slavery question." The free coinage plank, he said, with the silver dollar really worth 52 cents, meant the repudiation of the half part of all the debts incurred since 1872, when the gold dollar had been made the unit of value.

One of the campaign achievements of the *Evening Post* was truly spectacular. Immediately after Bryan's nomination its financial editor, Mr. A. D. Noyes, began publishing a series of editorials called "A Free Coinage Catechism." This question-and-answer presentation of controversial subjects was a familiar one in the *Evening Post* ever since Godkin assumed control, but it was never more effectively used than in July and August, 1896. Mr.

Noyes slashed directly into the errors of the Democrats, as a single brief excerpt will show:

Q. What is the fundamental contention of the free coinage advocates? A. That the amount of money in circulation has been decreasing since the demonetization of silver, and that this decrease has caused a general fall in prices.

Q. Is it true that the money supply has been decreasing? A. It is not.

Q. What are the facts? A. So far as the United States is concerned, there has been an enormous increase. In 1860 the money in circulation in this country was $442,102,477; in 1872 it was $738,309,549; by the Treasury bulletin, at the beginning of the present month of July, it was $1,509,725,200.

Q. What does this show? A. It shows that our money supply has increased 240 per cent. as compared with 1860, and 104 per cent. as compared with 1872.

These editorials were immediately issued by the *Evening Post* in a sixteen-page pamphlet, and by Sept. 4 a first edition of 1,350,000 copies had been sold. A new edition with two new chapters and other additional matter was then brought out, and by Nov. 2 the total sale had reached 1,956,000 copies. Horace White's pamphlet, "Coin's Financial Fool," continued to sell, and was supplemented by the publication in leaflet form of a public address which he had made in Chicago in 1893 upon "The Gold Standard: How It Came Into the World, and Why It Will Stay." It can safely be said that the most important campaign documents issued in behalf of sound money were these by Mr. Noyes and Mr. White.

Less spectacular, but no less effective, were Horace White's editorials throughout the summer. As reprinted by the *Nation*, they reached editors and other leaders of opinion the land over, and filtered down to the public by a thousand channels. Godkin wrote upon the more general political aspects of the campaign, leaving the hard day-to-day arguing mainly to Mr. White. During the whole campaign the paper managed to attack Bryan and Democracy without open advocacy of McKinley and the Republican Party. When McKinley published his letter

of acceptance, the *Post* wholeheartedly praised its financial passages, and declared that they defined the one real issue of the campaign. But its distaste for McKinley's personality, its aversion for his high-tariff views, and the repugnant character of the dominant Republican leaders —Hanna, Platt, Quay, Lodge, Frye, and others—prevented it from giving more than implied and tacit approval to his candidacy. Godkin himself voted the Gold Democratic ticket.

The New York press approached nearer to unanimity that summer than in any Presidential campaign since the era of good feeling. The *Journal* was Bryan's one important supporter. When he was nominated, the *World* turned its back upon him, saying: "Lunacy having dictated the platform, it was perhaps natural that hysteria should evolve the candidate." Though Dana called himself a Democrat, the *Sun* was more fervently anti-Bryan than the *Tribune*. Bryan called New York "the heart of what seems to be the enemy's country." His attempt to invade it in mid-August, when he journeyed 1,500 miles to Madison Square Garden to be notified of his nomination, was a dismal failure. The night was one of intense heat, the notification speech of Gov. W. J. Stone of Missouri was intolerably long, and the very character of Bryan's address was a disappointment. He had been expected to display the eloquence which had so dazzled the Chicago Convention. Instead, he read from manuscript a long speech on the model of Lincoln's Cooper Union Address, dealing in the dry tone of a student with what he imagined to be economic facts and governmental principles. Many hearers left early. But the *Post* explained his failure, not by his refusal to attempt eloquence, but by the fact that his dreary discourse abounded in "the most grating self-contradictions, the grossest blunders in matters of fact, the emptiest platitudes and vaguest assertions"; and by the fact that while Lincoln had appealed to national honor, the young man from the Platte argued "the cause of private dishonesty and public disgrace."

Some newspapers indulged in downright ferocity. The

Journal spoke of the plutocrats, the monopolists, the great corporations, and their protector Hanna, in characteristic *Journal* fashion. The *Tribune* called Bryan a "wretched, addle-pated boy posing in vapid vanity and mouthing resounding rottenness"; a man "apt . . . at lies and forgeries and blasphemies"; a "puppet in the blood-imbued hands of Altgeld, the anarchist" and of others who made up a "league of hell." The *Sun* applauded the Yale students who tried to break up a New Haven speech by Bryan. Even the *Post* spoke in the harshest tones of those Western farmers the genuineness of whose hardships no one now denies, and characterizes the struggle as one between "the great civilizing forces of the republic" and "the still surviving barbarism bred by slavery in the South and the reckless spirit of adventure in the mining camps of the West." Such overstatements show how intense was Eastern feeling over the election. Though the *Post's* attitude toward McKinley tempered its rejoicings in the result, it nevertheless hailed it as "the most impressive vindication of democracy governing according to law and order that the country has ever seen."

II

The one great doctrine that the *Evening Post* has maintained as insistently as its low-tariff stand is its opposition to any artificial extension of American sovereignty. From Coleman's protests against Jackson's high-handed invasion of the Floridas to Mr. Ogden's protest against the purchase of the Danish West Indies, this position has been unfalteringly sustained. Bryant was among the first to oppose the annexation of Texas, denounced Walker's filibusterers as "desperadoes" and "pirates," and could not condemn too fiercely the Southern projects for acquiring Cuba in the fifties. When Seward purchased Alaska, he opposed that act; for, as he said, many Congressmen advocated it not because they felt they were getting anything of value, but because it was a blow at the prestige of Great Britain and a precaution against the growth of her Pacific power. The basis of the *Evening Post's* scath-

ing attacks on President Grant's effort to annex Santo Domingo was its belief that the Anglo-Saxon rule of a Latin and negro people would be contrary to all traditions of the republic, and a complete evil for both countries.

The attitude of the paper toward conquest and military adventure was the same no matter what country was involved. Bryant could never see anything in the Crimean War but a useless and inexcusable sea of blood and misery. When the threat of the Franco-Prussian War first appeared, the *Evening Post* held that if the ambition of the French to dictate boundaries and sovereigns to Europe was to go on retarding civilization till it met an effectual check, now was the time to check it. Like every other American newspaper, the *Post* had been embittered against Napoleon III by his interference in Mexico and other acts of hostility toward the United States. The receipt of the news of Sedan was the signal for an impromptu celebration in the editorial rooms. Nevertheless, Bryant and his sub-editors warned Germany against annexation as a "barbarous custom," saying that she should let Napoleon III be the last European ruler who aspired to govern by force an unwilling and subjugated people. They also warned her against militarism, which had been the curse of France. "It is for united Germany to say that this wrong shall no longer continue; and the way to say it is to disband, as soon as peace is won, those huge armies which have done such mighty deeds, and thus declare to the world that Germany, like America, means peace; and has no fear, because it intends no wrong."

But if Bryant was always vigorous in denouncing armed aggression, Godkin was always savage. His hatred of national truculence colored his earliest public utterances. It inspired his indignant letters to the London *Daily News* upon the Trent Affair in 1861, when the tone of the British press and Foreign Office seemed to him needlessly offensive. The attitude he took in the *Nation* toward Dominican annexation and the designs of many Americans upon Cuba in the seventies was one of trenchant hostility. When he became editor of the *Evening Post*, not a year

passed without fresh criticism of this spirit. His attacks upon British military adventures were as freely expressed. When Gordon was killed at Khartum, he wrote with the utmost bitterness of the whole Sudan tragedy—the British Jingo demand for destruction of the Mahdi, its collision with the really admirable spirit of Arab nationalism, the waste of hundreds of millions, the death of hundreds of brave Britons and thousands of brave Arabs. "There is a powerful passage in De Maistre, apropos of war," he concluded, " describing the loathing and disgust which would be excited in the human breast by the spectacle of tens of thousands of cats meeting in a great plain, and scratching and biting each other till half their number were dead and mangled. To beings superior to man, conflicts like this in the Sudan must have much the same look of grotesque horror."

By 1894 Mr. Godkin was convinced that the spirit of jingoism was growing more and more rampant the world over. The Continent was divided between the Dual and Triple Alliances. The desire to grab territory had infected even Italy. That country had emerged from the struggle for unification one of the poorest in Europe, with taxation at the last limit of endurance. She badly needed reforms in education, administration, and communication. Yet she hastened to establish an army of 600,000, and a navy of a dozen battleships, and to hunt up some African natives to subjugate like other nations. The result of her efforts to assume a protectorate over Abyssinia was a series of defeats, heavy loss in men, the overthrow of the Crispi Ministry, and reduction to the verge of bankruptcy. "It is no longer sufficient for a people to be happy, peaceful, industrious, well-educated, lightly taxed," tauntingly wrote Godkin. "It must have somebody afraid of it. What does a nation amount to if nobody is afraid of it? Not a *fico secco,* as King Humbert would say." England was clearly headed for war in South Africa. But what grieved Mr. Godkin most was the evident desire of many Americans, the Hearsts and Lodges leading them, to fight somebody. In February, 1896, he wrote upon this phe-

nomenon under the title "National Insanity," comparing it to the recurrent disposition of some men to get drunk in spite of reason.

After the Venezuela Affair, the eagerness of these jingoes for a war turned toward Spain as an object. The Cubans had renewed their revolt in February, 1895, and fought so well that by the end of the next year they controlled three-fourths of the inland country. The cruelty of the struggle shocked Americans, while our heavy Cuban investments and trade gave us a pecuniary interest in the island. When it was proposed in Congress that the Cubans be recognized as belligerents (March, 1896), Godkin regarded this as evidence that Cleveland's Venezuela message had turned the thoughts of Congressmen toward baiting other nations. "He suggested to a body of idle, ignorant, lazy, and not very scrupulous men an exciting game, which involved no labor and promised lots of fun, and would be likely to furnish them with the means of annoying and embarrassing him." Recognition was out of the question, for the Cubans had no capital, no government, and no army but guerrilla bands. These facts A. G. Sedgwick demonstrated in "A Cuban Catechism." However, a number of incidents showed that American feeling was really growing. Princeton students that spring hanged the boy heir to the Spanish throne in effigy, miners in Leadville burnt a Spanish flag in the street, and Senator Morgan of Alabama tried in June to lash Congress into excitement over the American citizens who had been roughly treated by the Spanish authorities in Cuba.

At no time did the *Evening Post* conceal the fact that American interference might become necessary. Civil war in Cuba could not continue indefinitely; if the island were not pacified within a reasonable period, the United States would be justified in demanding a new policy on the part of Spain. Nor did it at any time conceal its indignation at Weyler's inhumane policy of herding the Cuban peasantry into the Spanish lines, and at other Spanish mistakes. Late in 1897 Spain offered Cuba a form of autonomy, but on careful examination, the *Post* pro-

nounced it a hollow cheat. The great essentials of government were kept in Spanish hands, and only a pretty plaything was extended. When Weyler was replaced by Blanco, who was sent out to pursue conciliation, the paper predicted that he would fail as generations before Alexander of Parma had failed when sent by Philip II to replace the bloody Alva in the low countries. No man, it said, could rule Cuba with a sword in one hand and an olive branch in the other. On Sept. 18, 1897, our Minister at Madrid tendered the friendly offices of the United States, and hinted that if the rebellion continued, President McKinley would take serious action. The *Post* spoke approvingly:

> This, it is important to recall, is the historic American position, and is the only rational and justifiable way of dealing with an affair which, in any aspect, is deplorable and thick with embarrassments. No longer ago than President Cleveland's message of Dec. 7, 1896, interference on the lines indicated was distinctly foreshadowed, and he was but taking his stand where President Grant had taken his in 1874 and 1875. With our foreign affairs then in the careful hands of Hamilton Fish, interference with Spain on the ground of the prolonged rebellion in Cuba was yet distinctly intimated. In his annual message of Dec. 7, 1874, Gen. Grant referred to the continuance of the "deplorable strife in Cuba," then of six years' duration, and said that "positive steps on the part of other Powers" might become "a matter of self-necessity."

But the *Evening Post* believed such interference should be peaceful. As the year 1898 opened, it was confident that war could be avoided. It knew that the Cubans would keep on fighting, and that Spain, nearly bankrupt, her soldiers dispirited, could not suppress the rebellion. But it thought that patient, friendly pressure by the United States upon Spain would force her to recognize the facts and give the Cubans a government that would satisfy them. When in February the *Journal* published a letter by the Spanish Minister, Dupuy de Lome, calling McKinley a cheap politician and caterer to the rabble, Godkin credited most Americans with taking the incident

good-naturedly—with finding De Lome's mortification and immediate resignation a source of amusement rather than anger. A few days later (Feb. 15) the destruction of the Maine, with the loss of 226 lives, caused a wave of horror and indignation, unparalleled since Fort Sumter, to sweep the country. Even yet, however, the *Post* could point with gratification to the steadiness of the general public, and its willingness to suspend judgment till an inquiry was made. The attitude of both Capt. Sigsbee of the Maine and President McKinley it pronounced admirable, as it did that of many important newspapers:

> The danger was that something rash would be done in the first confused moments. When once we began to think quietly about the affair, the rest was easy. It was at once evident that the chances were enormously in favor of the theory that the blowing up of the Maine was due to accident. But suppose it were shown that she was destroyed by foul play . . . what would that prove? That we should instantly declare war against Spain? By no means. It is simply inconceivable that the Spanish authorities in Cuba, high or low, could have countenanced any plot to destroy the Maine. Make them out as wicked as you please, they are not lunatics. . . .
>
> The first effect, then, of this shocking calamity upon the nation has been salutary. It has discovered in us a reserve of sanity, of calmness, of poise, and weight, which is worth more than all our navy. If we are able to display these qualities throughout, the world will think better of us and our self-respect will be heightened; and, despite the Jingoes, it is better to have foreign nations admire us than dread us, better to be conscious of strength of character than of strength of muscle.

One exception to this steadiness of opinion was furnished by a large Congressional group. When early in March Congress debated resolutions declaring Cuba a belligerent, Mr. Godkin characterized the debate as one that Americans could not read without humiliation. Many Republican Congressmen frankly looked to war for partisan advantage. Representative Grosvenor of Ohio said that it would be a Republican war, and that it offered the most brilliant opportunity that any Administration

had seen since Lincoln "to establish itself and its party in the praise and honor and glory of a mighty people." Senator Hale echoed him. Senator Platt said there would be one great compensation for the loss of life and treasure—"it would prevent the Democratic party from going into the next Presidential campaign with 'Free Cuba' and 'Free Silver' emblazoned on its banner." Until war was declared on April 25, the *Post* consistently praised President McKinley in one column, and assailed Congress in the next.

But its chief indignation was reserved for the war press, and especially for the *Journal* and *World*. These newspapers presented a curious study. From the files of the *Evening Post* it would hardly have been gathered that the nation was laboring under marked excitement, but from the editorials, pictures, and lurid headlines of the other two it appeared that the people were at fever heat.

"The Worst Insult to the United States in Its History," was the heading the *Journal* gave De Lome's letter. For days thereafter nearly every headline contained the word "war." "Spain Makes War on the *Journal* by Seizing the Yacht Buccaneer," ran one, this being Hearst's newsboat at Havana. "Threatening Moves by Both Spain and the United States—We Send Another War Vessel to Join Maine at Sea," followed it next day. After the catastrophe to the Maine the *Journal* made the welkin ring. "The Warship Maine Was Split in Two by an Enemy's Secret Infernal Machine!" it trumpeted. "Officers and Men at Key West Describe the Mysterious Rending of the Vessel, and Say It Was Done by Design and Not by Accident—Captain Sigsbee Practically Declares That His Ship Was Blown Up by a Mine or Torpedo." These were the first page headlines on the 17th. Inside were ribbon headlines running across the next half dozen pages. "Belief in Havana That the Maine Was Anchored Over a Mine"; "Foreign Nations Shocked by the Belief in Spanish Treachery"; "War Probable if Spaniards Blew Up American Warship"; "Let the Cabinet Soon Avenge the Slaughtered Sailors." Next day the *Journal* blared,

"The Whole Country Thrills With the War Fever," while it reported a poll of both houses showing an overwhelming sentiment in favor of immediate intervention.

The *World* also knew positively within a few hours that the Maine was blown up by Spanish treachery. When Secretary Long pleaded for patience, it exposed him in a glaring indictment: "Long's Exoneration of Spain Nets Senatorial Clique $20,000,000." That is, it accused Senators of playing the market. On the same page a news-story demanded a whole bank of headlines. " 'Send Maine Away!' Begged a Stranger at Our Consulate—Every Day for a Week a Mysterious Elderly Spaniard Offered That Warning, But It Was Unheeded, for He Was Deemed a Crank." It had the same iteration as the *Journal*. Thus on March 4 its headlines ran, "Torpedo Blew Up the Maine, High Spanish Officer Says—If His Story Is True, It Verifies the *World* Correspondent's Earliest News." On March 12 it announced: "Full and Convincing Proof That the Maine Was Destroyed Exactly as the *World* Exclusively and Authoritatively Told Three Days After the Disaster."

The *Journal* and *World* were the two New York newspapers then preëminent for their illustrations. The former specialized in pictures of "How the Maine Actually Looks, Wrecked by Spanish Treachery." It had drawings of dead bodies, "vultures hovering over their grim feast"; piles of coffins; divers among the tangled wreckage; starving reconcentrados; the Vizcaya in New York harbor; Mayor Van Wyck insulting the Vizcaya's captain at City Hall; big guns being mounted on American forts; of troops drilling; and a "frenzy on the stock exchange, realizing the imminence of war." More than a month before war was declared the *Journal* plastered its first page with an announcement of its "War Fleet, Correspondents, and Artists," these including Julian Hawthorne, James Creelman, Alfred Henry Lewis, and Frederic Remington. The *World* was notable for cartoons, the prevailing theme of which was Uncle Sam kicking Spain out of Cuba into the Atlantic.

Mr. Godkin's opinion of the newspaper jingoes was only a little more savage than that of many other sober men. When a *Journal* reporter just before war began fabricated an interview with Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the latter seized the opportunity for a frank statement of his estimate of the paper. When the same sheet asked ex-President Cleveland to serve on a committee to erect a monument to the Maine heroes, Mr. Cleveland wired back: "I decline to allow my sorrow for those who died on the Maine to be perverted to an advertising scheme for the New York *Journal.*" Godkin was brutally frank. "A yellow journal office is probably the nearest approach, in atmosphere, to hell, existing in any Christian state," he wrote. This press he deemed a totally irresponsible force, without the restraint of conscience, law, or the police. It treated war, he said, as a prize fight, and begat in hundreds of thousands of the class which enjoys prize-fights an eager desire to read about it. "These hundreds of thousands write to their Congressmen clamoring for war, as the Romans used to clamor for *panem et circenses,* and as the timid and quiet are generally attending only too closely to their business, the Congressman concludes that if he, too, does not shout for war, he will lose his seat. . . . Our cheap press to-day speaks in tones never before heard out of Paris. It urges upon ignorant people schemes more savage, disregard of either policy, or justice, or experience more complete, than the modern world has witnessed since the French Revolution."

It was with reference to such journalism that the *Times,* which this year went to the one-cent basis of the *World* and *Journal,* spoke of itself as a paper which does not "soil the breakfast table." Godkin argued that the public, by purchasing the yellow sheets, made itself the accomplice of their jingo editors. The *Journal* struck back at him and Bennett of the *Herald.* It was not surprised, it said, by the abuse it received from editors who either lived in Europe, or, being native there, came to this country too late in life to absorb the spirit of American

institutions; these men were unfitted to gauge the trend and force of national opinion, and were un-American in their instincts, while the *Journal,* with its million buyers a day, was an American paper for the American people.

Until just before the declaration of war, Godkin tried to cling to his faith in McKinley's steadfastness. On April 5 he wrote: "He has, with a firmness for which we confess we did not give him credit, retained the Cuban matter in his own hands, and has made no concealment of his belief that he could settle it, if left alone, by peaceful methods." The editor believed that America could justly demand of Spain an immediate armistice, relief of the reconcentrados, and an offer of genuine autonomy to the Cubans. It appeared in the early days of April that Premier Sagasta was willing to concede as much, and Godkin thought this offered a bridge to assured peace. Why not accept the Spanish Ministry's concessions, he wrote April 9 and later, and give a fair trial to their autonomy? What reason had we to make a further demand for the withdrawal of all Spanish troops? And if we did demand it, how could we expect Spain to accede until the Cortes met on April 25, since only the Cortes had power to surrender Spanish territory? It was true that the Cubans refused an armistice and autonomy. But, argued Godkin, they did so only because they counted on dragging us into the war upon the margin between autonomy and absolute independence. And what a pitiful margin that was! No one believed that the Cubans were ready for absolute independence, for like the Central American peoples, they would be turbulent and unstable, requiring constant oversight. Then why not leave them under the Spanish flag so long as they had the healthy substance, even though not the name, of freedom?

Mr. Godkin did not give up hope even when, on April 11, McKinley sent Congress his war message, asking that he be empowered to use the armed forces of the United States "to secure a full and final termination of hostilities between the Government of Spain and the people of Cuba." He took the view that this was not equivalent to

a use of our armed forces against Spain—that it meant only that McKinley was going to insist upon a truce. The *Evening Post* seized upon the fact that McKinley had advised against recognition of the Cuban Republic, and upon his hopeful words regarding Queen Isabel's proclamation of an armistice, as proof that the door to peace was not closed. In fact, many sober men hoped for days after this message that McKinley would somehow avert a collision with Spain. Howells says that on one of these warm April nights he walked down the street with Godkin, the two talking gloomily of the outlook, and that as they parted, Godkin shook off his fears with a quick, "O, well, there isn't going to be any war, after all." But Spain at once severed diplomatic relations, the United States declared a blockade of Cuba, and the die was cast. A few mornings after Godkin's talk with Howells, the jingo press gloated over the capture of a poor little Spanish schooner, whose captain and owner wept to find his all confiscated.

Not until later was it revealed that when he sent his war message to Congress, President McKinley failed to inform it of the full scope and definiteness of the Spanish concessions regarding Cuba. Of this failure two views may be taken. One is that he knew no reliance could be placed upon Spain's good faith, and that she could not end the intolerable state of affairs in the island if she tried. The other is that McKinley was guilty of duplicity all along; that he had played a waiting game until preparations could be made for war and the public mind accustomed to it, and then willingly let the advocates of intervention have their way. Godkin and the *Post* took the second view, and in later days spoke of the President's conduct in this crisis with scorn.

Yet the newspaper, applauded though it was in its protestant attitude by the intellectual group which Howells, Carl Schurz, Charles Eliot Norton, and Charles Francis Adams represented, rallied to support the war. Since it had come, it hoped it would be short and decisive. Before

hostilities began, it had said much regarding the unpreparedness of the nation, and the certainty of graft in conducting the conflict. But now it urged the energetic prosecution of the contest, praised the martial ardor of American youth, and commended the military and naval policies of the Administration. Mr. Godkin had no petty rancor and no lack of patriotism. Other journals were lavish of faultfinding, but no criticism found its way into the *Evening Post* until practically all fighting was ended.

To the series of victories which began with Dewey's exploit at Manila, the *Post* rose with fitting enthusiasm. It called the Santiago campaign, when it ended on July 15, a brilliant impromptu. Who would have thought two months earlier that a triumph of such magnitude would so soon be won? Then the flower of the Spanish navy had lain in the harbor, and a Spanish force estimated at 20,000 to 35,000 held the well-fortified city; but in less than two months the fleet had been destroyed, the city taken, and the army made prisoners, all with a loss of less than 300 American lives. The *Post* paid a due tribute to the valor of American fighting men:

> Lieut. Hobson deprecated the cheers that welcomed him back to the American lines. "Any of you would have done it." Very likely. We know that practically every man on the fleet offered to go with him when volunteers were called for. Such high appeals to bravery and duty command their own response. But the men below—the engineers, exposed to death without being able to strike a blow; the stokers, whose enemy is the cruel heat in which they have to work—where does their heroism come in? Of course, in the same self-forgetful devotion to their duty which marks some world-resounding deed of an officer like Hobson. That was a frightful detail of the Spanish flight to ruin—the officers having to stand over gunners and stokers with drawn pistols to keep them to their task. Ships on which that was necessary were evidently beaten in advance. Contrast the state of things on the Oregon, in her long voyage against time from the Pacific. Captain Clark reported that even the stokers worked till they fainted in the fire-room, and then would fight to go back as soon as they recovered consciousness. To hurry up coaling, the officers threw off their coats and slaved like navvies. There we

see the spirit of heroism pervading a ship from captain to coal-heaver; and it is that which makes the navy invincible.

III

As summer ended, however, and the cessation of fighting gave the country an opportunity to ask itself what it should do with Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, the continuity of the *Evening Post's* policy became plain. For one thing, it now felt able to state its frank opinion that the war had been criminally unnecessary. Gen. Woodford, our last Minister at Madrid, and Congressman Boutelle made speeches at a Boston dinner on Oct. 28 in which they both virtually said as much. In all its references to the conflict after midsummer the paper made clear its conviction that it was "due solely to the combination of a sensational and unscrupulous press with an equally reckless and unscrupulous majority in Congress and a weak executive in the White House." But the chief energies of the *Post* were devoted to opposing the designs of those who wanted to annex the Philippines and Cuba, or at least the former. When the war was impending, it had dreaded the loss in life and money much less than the deterioration which might be produced in the national fiber, and had predicted the possible transformation of America into an international swaggerer. Now Godkin saw indisputable evidence that the European virus of imperialism, economic and political, was entering our veins.

"Manifest Destiny" was the argument used against the *Evening Post,* Springfield *Republican,* Senators Hoar, Hale, and Spooner, Carl Schurz, and the other leaders in the struggle against annexations. What would you do with the Philippines? they were asked. Since they were in our hands, could we abandon them without thought of their future? "As matters now stand," answered the *Evening Post* on Oct. 1, 1898, "having possession of Manila, we should do what we could to make Spain give the Philippines a better government or hand them over to the lawful owners—the inhabitants." The whole American theory of government was opposed to alien rule.

We could never incorporate the Philippines in the Union —this argument the *Post* had also used against annexing Hawaii—and it was a total reversal of national policy to acquire territory that could not be incorporated. Replying to the contention that the Filipinos might be unable to erect a good government, the *Post* asked if New York and Pennsylvania under Platt and Quay had one.

The chief assertions of the *Evening Post*, some of them since validated and some invalidated by time, are worth noting *seriatim*. It feared that the cost of subjugating, garrisoning and governing the Philippines would be heavy. It pointed out that in the management of inferior peoples—the negro slaves, Indians, Chinese—had lain the source of our chief national troubles. Our Federal authorities had always shown marked incapacity for governing such wards, as their "century of dishonor" in dealing with the Indians, and wretched treatment of the freedmen during Reconstruction proved. The American Government had been erected to provide for the welfare and liberty of the American nation alone, and if we undertook in a spirit of expansion to carry benefits to every misgoverned race with which we came in accidental contact, we would soon be in trouble in every part of the globe. The *Post* believed that half the talk of Duty and Destiny was raised by people on the make, who wanted their trade to follow the flag. The name of the United States, it asserted, had been great because it stood for peaceful industry, contempt for the military adventures of Europe, and the right of every separate people to liberty; its influence had furnished the chief hope for disarmament, and now was it to be thrown away for the pride of possessing "subjects"? Above all, Godkin apprehended the effect of expansion on our national character. The great question, as Bishop Potter put it, was not what we should do with the Philippines, but what the Philippines would do with us.

So intense was the *Post's* feeling that it virtually opposed Theodore Roosevelt when the fall of 1898 he ran for the Governorship against the Tammany candidate Van Wyck. Ordinarily, it would have supported him en-

thusiastically in such a contest, but Roosevelt's annexationist speeches led it to declare that Tammany control would be a local and temporary evil, while any encouragement to imperialism would be national and irrevocable. Early in 1899 the *Post's* correspondents in Manila warned it that, as one wrote, "the United States must make up their minds either to fight for these islands or to give them up." Just before the peace treaty, carrying annexation of the islands, was ratified, occurred Aguinaldo's attempt to rush the American lines at Manila. Godkin declared that we had paid $20,000,000 simply for a right to conquer, adding bitterly:

> We have apparently rushed into this business with as little preparation or forethought as into the Cuban War. We got hold of the notion that it would be a good thing to annex 1,200 islands at the other end of the world, simply because we won a naval victory over a feeble Power in the harbor of one of them, and because people like Griggs of New Jersey wanted some "glory." We then went to work to buy 1,200 islands without any knowledge of their extent, population, climate, production, or of the feelings, wishes, or capacity of the inhabitants. We did not even know their number. While in this state of ignorance, far from trying to conciliate them, assure them of our good intentions, disarm their suspicions of us—men of a different race, language, and religion, of whom they had only recently heard—we issued one of the most contemptuous and insulting proclamations a conqueror has ever issued, announcing to them that their most hated and secular enemy had sold them to us, and that if they did not submit quietly to the sale we should kill them freely.

It was now impossible to advocate immediate and complete evacuation, and during the spring of 1899 the *Post* suggested another solution. It proposed that instead of administering the islands as a possession, we content ourselves with setting up a protectorate, allowing the Filipino republic to function under our general oversight. The islanders were willing to accept this, for they knew they could not stand alone against the voracity of Europe. We could send them schoolteachers, sanitary experts, missionaries, and government advisers, but we would not have

to crush their spirit before we began helping them, and would be their friends, not their conquerors. Godkin was shocked by the lighthearted irresponsibility of the annexationists. "The one thing which will prevent expansion being a disgrace, is a permanent colonial civil service," he wrote a friend, "but who is doing a thing or saying a word about it?"

While the controversy over the Philippines was at its hottest, in the spring of 1899, Mr. Godkin left for Europe, where he had spent every summer but one since 1891. In 1897 he had received his D. C. L. at Oxford, and in 1898 an honorary degree at Cambridge, but this year the alarming state of his health was his sole reason for sailing. The warnings of the doctors in Paris and Vichy were so earnest that he resolved to give up his connection with the *Evening Post*. His formal withdrawal took place Jan. 1, 1900, but though he was home in New York by the beginning of the preceding October, he contributed only advice and an "occasional roar," as Henry James put it, to the *Post* thereafter. It was a depressing moment for him to lay down his pen. The United States seemed to have caught the infection of the Old World fever that he feared. His native country was busy crushing the Boer republics. The political condition of the nation, the State, and the city, with Mark Hanna, Platt and Quigg, Croker and Sheehan at the height of their power, was such as to make the editor feel that the forces against which he had battled were too strong to defeat. But as Charles Eliot Norton wrote him, he had earned the right to leave the field. "When the work of this century is summed up, what you have done for the good old cause of civilization, the cause which is always defeated, but always after defeat taking more advanced position than before—what you have done for this cause will count for much."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

CHARACTERISTICS OF A FIGHTING EDITOR: E. L. GODKIN

ONE essential qualification of a great editor, a masterful personality, was so distinctively possessed by Mr. Godkin that it may be doubted whether any other American daily since the Civil War has been so much the expression of a single mind and character as the *Evening Post* from 1883 to 1899. The frequent statement that he was an incomparable leader-writer, but not an all-round journalist, has an element of truth, but is highly misleading. The editorial page was wholly his own, for he determined its policies, molded the ideas of his fellow-editors, and by force of example gave several of them—as a great editor always will—some characteristics of his style. The news pages he accorded only distant oversight, and one of his city editors doubts whether he regularly read more than the first page and the page opposite the editorials. Yet every cub reporter grasped Godkin's clear-cut ideas of what a newspaper should be, and strove to contribute his mite to the realization of the editor's ideals. There was no other journal resembling it, and its dignity, integrity, thoughtfulness, scholarly accuracy, and pride of intellect were the reflection of Godkin's own traits. We may say that while Godkin did not pay close daily attention to any part of his journal save the editorials, the news writers, the financial writers, the critics, and the business department all paid close attention to Mr. Godkin's views regarding their work; they would no more have thought of standing counter to them than of stepping in front of an Alpine avalanche.

The soul of the paper, its editorial page, was the product of a morning editorial conference which in its highly developed character Mr. Godkin was the first to give New York journalism. Upon the *Post* of Bryant's

day, and upon the *Tribune* under Greeley and his successive managing editors, consultation had been brief, and the assignment of editorial topics hasty. The elder Bennett had been wont to give *Herald* writers their subjects for the day as so many orders. But the necessity of treating ten or twelve different editorial topics in each issue of the *Post* after 1881, and Mr. Godkin's solicitude that each topic be treated just right, made an elaborate conference imperative. At about nine the editorial staff gathered in a circle of chairs in Mr. Godkin's room, having mastered the morning papers, and a businesslike discussion filled forty minutes.

Every writer was encouraged to propose his own theme for a paragraph or column editorial, and to speak freely upon themes raised by others. But Mr. Godkin had a merciless way with unsound or commonplace ideas. When some one started a subject, he would pounce upon him with "What would you say about it?" and an intensely searching glance. It was a trying moment. If the junior editor had nothing worth while to say, Godkin would cut across his flounderings with "O, there's nothing in that," or "We said that the other day," or "O, everybody sees that"—emphasizing the statement with a sharp gesture or a swing in his chair. "Sometimes, after an interested attention for a few seconds," writes Mr. Bishop, "a quick, searching question would be put that went through the subject like a knife through a toy balloon, leaving complete and utter collapse."

However, proportionately great was the reward of the fortunate man who had an original idea, or a new way of presenting an old one. Mr. Godkin's eye would kindle with interest, he would lean forward alertly, and catching up the theme, he would perhaps begin to enlarge it by ideas of his own, search its depths with penetrating inquiries, and reveal such possibilities in it that the original speaker had the feeling of having stumbled over a concealed diamond. If the chief, as was usually the fact, was provided with his own topic for the day, the proposer bore his discovery off in triumph. If not, he

sometimes had to surrender it. "The chances were ten to the dozen," says Mr. Bishop, "that Mr. Godkin would become so delighted with the development of the subject, so intoxicated with the intellectual pleasures of the treatment, that he would say, with a serene smile of perfect enjoyment, 'I'll write on that.' "

The editorial page represented work done not leisurely, but under the highest pressure. Articles of twelve hundred words, dealing informatively, thoughtfully, and in compressed style with some subject perhaps quite unexpected until that morning, had to be completed in about an hour and three-quarters. Taken, often without change, into the *Nation,* they withstood the test of submission to the most scholarly and exacting audience in America. The pace was not for the muddleheaded. But no one on the staff could hope to write quite like Mr. Godkin—with his wealth of ideas, ability to see a dozen relationships in a subject where the ordinary man saw one, and concise, pithy, and graphic style. Lowell told him, "You always say what I would have said—if I had only thought of it." In the correction of proofs the whole staff was expected to join. Godkin was far from being the most approachable of editors, but to any suggestion that there was a defect in his idea or expression he turned a ready ear. Indeed, if a fellow-editor believed that a phrase or sentence was obscure, he would usually alter it whether he agreed or not, arguing that what one man in the office found faulty might seem so to a large body outside. The editorial page which thus appeared in its final form at two o'clock was an embodiment of the wisdom of the whole editorial group, Mr. Godkin dominating.

Brusque and cold though he often seemed to those who did not know him well, Godkin to the other editors was essentially a lovable man. He exacted a high standard of performance, his temper was highly mercurial, he was often abrupt in manner; but the recollection of his associates is that he gave the office an atmosphere of geniality. He delighted in jest. He would repeat with great gusto the story that staff meetings opened with a distribution

of Cobden Club gold, or—it was said after the Venezuela episode—with a singing of "God Save the Queen." His fun was of an intellectual kind, but he never failed to find subjects for it. Frequently the editorial conference would break up in a gale of merriment. Norton once wrote him, when the *Nation's* troubles were giving him sleepless nights, that he would rather see the weekly perish than have its editor lose his jocularity, and Godkin wrote back: "I shall keep my laugh. Don't be afraid." Indeed, his letters contain any number of references to laughter, and with intimates it was often uproarious. He told Howells that his youth was "harrowed with laughter." When Howells worked beside him for three months in the *Nation* office the novelist-to-be found that "we were of a like temperament in the willingness to laugh and make laugh." If anything in the day's news particularly apt for Howells's special department turned up, they would talk it over, "and he did not mind turning away from his own manuscript and listening to what I had written, if the subject had offered any chance for fun. Then his laugh, his Irish laugh, hailed my luck with it, or his honest English misgiving expressed itself in a criticism which I had to own just."

Men who read Godkin's caustic denunciation of some wrong-doer, who admired the keen thrust with which he punctured a bit of hypocrisy, sometimes assumed that he was sour and censorious. Such readers failed to realize that he had a dual nature; that what excited his wrath and scorn often excited his risibilities also. "First would come the savage characterization, then the peal of laughter," writes Mr. Ogden. He had a tongue for humorous phrases, an eye for humorous images, and a marked love for comic exaggeration. After his retirement in 1899, when some people were chattering about his pessimism, the weekly articles he contributed for a time over his initials to the *Evening Post* abounded in amusing sentences and vivacious anecdotes. Reviewing his labors for civil service reform, he recalled how when he, Congressman Jenckes, and Henry Villard held the first meeting on the

subject in New York, he was appointed to draft resolutions; that the proposer was unable to read his hasty handwriting; and that "more unhappily still, when I was asked to take his place, I could not read it either!" Writing of McKinley's amateur statesmanship, he told of the youth who, asked whether he could play the piano, replied that "he did not know, for he had never tried." Discussing Capt. Mahan's treatment of war as possessing benefits as well as evils, he was reminded of the French Deputy who did not want to lose the anarchist votes scattered through his district: "My friends," he said, "there is a great deal of good in anarchy; only we must not abuse it." Incessant bits like these reveal the fun-loving nature, the overflowing spirits, of the man.

Mr. Godkin's marked social proclivities enlarged his influence and enriched his writing. The readiness with which, on coming to America, he made friends among the most distinguished men of Cambridge, Boston, and New York was only less remarkable than the long intimacy he enjoyed with some of the finest minds of England and this country—with Lowell and Norton, Bryce and Henry James, Gladstone and Parkman, McKim and Olmsted. He was a genial host, a witty, diverting, and brilliant guest. Mr. Ogden gives an instance of the way in which his personal charm and full mind surprised some who thought of him as a narrow, savage moralist of the editorial page. At the Century Club one night he was seated at the long dinner table with a man he knew and another who was a stranger. The latter had never seen Mr. Godkin but had taken a violent dislike to his writings. Without an introduction, the talk was free and genial, and Godkin was in his happiest vein. When the editor had left the room, the stranger inquired as to his identity. "Is that Mr. Godkin?" he exclaimed in surprise. "Then I'll never say another word against him as long as I live." Godkin worked with great intensity—as he himself once said, "almost dangerously hard." His gusto and enthusiasm, especially in times of crisis like a Presidential or Tammany campaign, gave him an extraordinary absorp-

tion in his work. Yet he found time to see and talk with a surprising number of people worth seeing—authors, reformers, politicians, college professors, the best lawyers of the city, and many more.

A journal of twenty-two days of his life (November, 1870) shows what a multiplicity of public meetings, dinners, calls, and club evenings interspersed his toil. A half dozen times he dined or breakfasted out or entertained to dinner, thus seeing among others Bryant, Ripley, Charles Loring Brace, and H. M. Field. He was also at the public dinner of the Mercantile Library Association, where he spoke for the press, and of the Free Traders at Delmonico's where he saw A. T. Stewart, Peter Cooper, H. C. Potter, Stewart L. Woodford, Gen. McDowell, and David A. Wells. He went to a civil service meeting at Yale, where there was a tea-party in his honor, and not only made a speech but "met all the big-bugs." Once he lunched with Henry and Charles Francis Adams. He records going in torrents of rain to a night meeting of revenue reformers, while he attended a lecture by A. J. Mundella, and chatted there with G. W. Curtis. Repeatedly he speaks of being at the Century Club and seeing a long list of acquaintances—Lord Walter Campbell, Judge Daly, Gen. Howard, William E. Dodge, H. C. Potter, and Cyrus Field. He called upon Horace White, then in the city from Chicago, and at the *Nation* office received calls from Carl Schurz and Schuyler Colfax, the latter coming while he was out. This was nearly a dozen years before he became one of the editors of the *Evening Post*, but he always maintained a similar activity. What it meant to his editorial work is self-evident. As one of his junior editors, Mr. Bishop, says, all was grist to his mill. "A casual quip in conversation, the latest good story, a sentence from a new book, a fresh bit of political slang—all these found lodgment in his mind, and just at the proper place they would appear in his writing."

Godkin had little patience for mere office routine, and as he grew older took advantage of the liberty which an

evening paper often gives its editor for leaving early. His dislike for bores played a large part in this. As he humorously said, he saw nobody before one, and at one he went home. Of his refusal to tolerate callers who abused his time and temper, there are some amusing stories. A dull or offensive man would be ushered in, the editor would endure him for a while, and then upon the heels of a muffled explosion, the caller would emerge, red with confusion and anger, and hurriedly make for the elevator. Mr. H. J. Wright, as city editor, once introduced a gentleman of prominence, with an extensive knowledge of municipal affairs. After a long and interesting chat, Godkin asked, "How is it I never met such a well-informed man before?" A few days later the gentleman called again, seated himself with assurance in Mr. Godkin's room, and began to repeat himself, a thing the editor abominated. Hearing a confusion of voices, Mr. Wright hurried into the hall to find Godkin angrily shooing the interrupter out of the building.

Mr. Godkin and Horace White gathered around them an editorial staff of high ability. From the outset they had the services of Arthur G. Sedgwick, who was assistant editor from 1881 to 1885, and later not only contributed irregularly at all times, but during one summer worked in the office in Godkin's absence. He was a writer of strong mental grasp and individuality of style, who furnished editorials and book-reviews on an amazing variety of topics, and had the knack of illuminating and making interesting everything he touched. His education as a lawyer—he had been co-editor with Oliver Wendell Holmes, later Justice of the Supreme Court, of the *American Law Review*—stood him in good stead in discussions of government and politics, he wrote much on belles lettres, and he was only less able than Godkin himself in treating modes and manners. When Godkin was a beginning editor he found it difficult, as he wrote Olmsted, to get an associate "to do the work of gossiping agreeably on manners, lager beer, etc., and who will bind himself to do it, whether he feels like it or not." Sedgwick was

just the man for the light, keen treatment of social topics. He had a discerning eye and a quick sense of humor. Many of his editorials were as good as the short essays of the same type which Curtis and Howells contributed to the Easy Chair of *Harper's*, and had more than local and temporary fame. For example, in March, 1883, he wrote one on the dude which, reprinted all over the country, did much to familiarize this London music-hall term. It traced the lineage of the dude from the dandy, fop, and swell; it carefully distinguished him from these earlier types by his intense correctness, contrasting with their display; it described his appearance in great detail; it explained why he had arisen at just that moment; and it closed with a grave warning to all dudes to be on guard against the chief menace to their sober conservatism—they must not wear white spats.

Joseph Bucklin Bishop, later well known as secretary of the Isthmian Commission and authorized editor of Roosevelt's letters, joined the *Post* the summer of 1883, and remained with it until 1900, when he became chief of the *Globe's* editorial staff. He also commanded a wide range of subjects, though he dealt much more with politics than Sedgwick, and he wrote with a great deal of Godkin's own point. To Bishop belongs the credit for originating the Voters' Directory in 1884, still a valued campaign feature of the *Post*, while he had a principal hand in the campaign biographies which were so effective against Tammany. E. P. Clark was brought from the Springfield *Republican* into the office when Sedgwick left in the mid-eighties, and until after the end of the century his industrious hand was in constant evidence. He had the most nearly colorless style of the staff, but his full knowledge and accuracy in handling governmental and economic topics were invaluable.

The first contributions to the *Post* by Mr. Rollo Ogden were printed in 1881, and during the next three years he wrote frequently from Mexico City. His assistance increased after he came to New York in 1887, and in 1891 he became assistant editor and one of the pillars of the

newspaper. Besides his attention to national and international politics, he gave the columns a much more literary flavor than they had had even when Sedgwick was present. There were, in addition, several writers of a briefer connection. Early in the eighties some articles exposing the defects of the Tenth Census were furnished by John C. Rose, a Baltimore attorney, and during a number of summers he joined the office staff; a Federal attorneyship, followed by elevation to the Federal bench, ended his connection. David M. Means, another attorney and a one-time professor at Middlebury College, helped during many years for short periods. The editorial columns were always open to experts in various fields who wished to contribute. Among those who occasionally furnished leaders in the eighties and nineties were future college presidents like A. T. Hadley and E. J. James, scientists like Simon Newcomb and A. F. Bandelier, and scholars like H. H. Boyesen and Worthington C. Ford.

The rank and file of the city room regarded Mr. Godkin as a remote deity, though he was on a familiar footing with the managing editors, Learned and Linn, and of frank intimacy with the city editor, H. J. Wright. "I used to see him come into the office occasionally," writes Norman Hapgood, "with very much the same emotion that I might have now if I saw Lloyd George walk past me." Godkin frequently rode up in the elevator with reporters, but never spoke to them, and did not know most of them by sight. Mr. Wright gives two examples of his utter indifference to a performance of special merit in the news columns. In the early days of the litigation over the interstate commerce commission, there was a hearing in New York involving intricate law points and the rather obscure rights of the carrier, attended by some of New York's most eminent lawyers, including Godkin's friends Choate and James C. Carter. Norman Hapgood, a new recruit, was assigned the difficult task of covering it, and wrote a column and a half a day for the whole week. When the hearing closed, Choate sent Godkin a note congratulating him upon the *Post's* reports, and say-

ing that few lawyers could have comprehended the arguments so fully, and still fewer have summarized them so well. "Upon this deserved encomium," says Mr. Wright, "Godkin offered no comment, nor did he inquire as to the reporter's identity." Again, a prominent New Yorker wrote the editor praising a brief account of the descent of an awe-inspiring thunderstorm, and recording his pleasure that the news columns showed the same literary qualities as the editorial page. Godkin had not read the news story, did not read it, and did not ask for the writer's name.

One element in this was Godkin's assumption that, as a matter of course, the news pages would meet a high standard; but a larger element was sheer indifference to the reporters. The editorial page was preëminently the most important part of the newspaper to him. Absorbed in the ideas he spread upon it, and naturally of an aloof temperament, he was not interested in subordinates elsewhere. That he was very far from being an unappreciative man his editorial associates alone knew. They received cordial notes of congratulation from him, all the more prized because rare, for any specially meritorious work; and whenever a literary review particularly struck him, he made a point of asking for the writer's name.

Mr. Towse, the dramatic critic, recalls receiving formal commendation from Godkin twice or thrice. One occasion was early in the eighties, when Henry Irving opened in a Shakespearean rôle in Philadelphia. All the dramatic critics were taken over by courtesy of the theater, entertained in Philadelphia, and given seats at the performance; and most of them remained at a Philadelphia hotel overnight. Mr. Towse returned to New York on a midnight train, took a cold bath, wrote a criticism of nearly two columns, and visiting the office at dawn, had it put into type. Proofs were ready when the editors arrived, and Godkin was so pleased that he for once unbent and sent an appreciative note.

Once in the nineties, Godkin even praised the reporters, though not for anything they had written. It happened

that a grand jury refused an indictment in a political case, under circumstances that pointed to collusion between several jurors and the accused politician. Godkin gave utterance to these suspicions, showed that several jurymen were of evil character, and declared that one had been the proprietor of a low dive in which a shooting brawl had occurred. The juror promptly had him indicted for criminal libel, and when counsel undertook the case, they found that no legal proof existed of the alleged brawl. In desperation, Godkin appealed to the head of the Byrnes Detective Bureau, a personal friend, for help, and Byrnes made a thorough investigation of the juror's past, without avail. He urged the editor to compromise the case, and offered his help for that purpose. Meanwhile, the *Evening Post* reporters had been ransacking the loft of the old Mott Street police headquarters, where station house blotters were stored. At the end of a seven days' search, they found an entry telling of the shooting affray. The entry was photographed, Godkin appeared before another grand jury, waved the photograph in the face of the district attorney, and was vindicated. "His appreciation of the work done by the city staff was expressed that day with Irish enthusiasm," says Mr. Wright.

On the other hand, Godkin was quick—even savagely so—to descend upon any man whose writing did not accord with his positive ideas regarding good journalism. His severity in dealing with an error of fact, proportion, or taste grew out of his rapt intensity in his own work. He pushed blunderers out of his way less because he was tactless—though he was often that—than because he was engrossed in hewing to the line. Lincoln Steffens, one of the best newspaper men New York ever had, happened to write a simple account of a music teacher's death under distressing circumstances, which appeared on the first page. Godkin read it, leaped to the conclusion that it smacked of the sensationalism he was always denouncing, and declared that Steffens ought to be instantly dismissed. Mr. Wright protested, and the controversy brought in

Mr. Garrison, who roundly asserted that the story was not only permissible, but admirable—whereupon Godkin yielded. Some remarkable work by Hapgood in reporting the meetings of the illiterate Board of Education attracted Godkin's eye and editorial notice; but the one message he sent Hapgood was that he wanted him to confine himself to narration and description, avoiding comment. New York has never had a more expert music critic than Mr. Finck, but Godkin sometimes censured him severely for what he thought intemperate writing.

Godkin would have been a greater journalist had he taken a broad and human interest in other departments of the newspaper than his own; and the *Evening Post* might have had a different history. It would have been less open to the reproach leveled against it, of being rather a magazine than a newspaper. Its circulation, instead of hovering uncertainly between 14,000 and 20,000, might have become extensive. The stone wall that was kept standing between editorial rooms and news rooms was good for neither. Mr. Godkin's lack of broad cordiality and interest was not felt by those in daily contact with him, but it was often felt by those at the outer desks. Any newspaper must suffer if departmental members work as some did on the *Post*, to avoid censure and not to gain praise, for in such work there can be no initiative. There were employees who, in making decisions, would take no chance of doing anything the editor would not like, and were hence hostile to any innovation. "What I did not like and still resent somewhat," says Lincoln Steffens, "is that he objected to individuality in reporting." The newspaper was made too much for Godkin, too little for outside readers.

II

Yet Godkin's defects as a general journalist only throw into clearer relief his distinction as a molder of opinion. The *Evening Post* was quite enough of a newspaper to be a vehicle for his editorial page, and for him that sufficed. He had no wish to appeal directly to several hun-

dred thousand subscribers, to reach the ear of the masses, as Greeley had done. Nothing could have persuaded him to write down to the level of education and intelligence which a huge audience would have possessed. Editorial utterances could be quoted to show that he thought a daily was better when it appealed to comparatively small and select groups. In 1889 he deplored the nation-wide movement for reducing newspaper prices, and said that the *Times* and *Tribune* had been better at four cents than they were at two. Godkin spoke to the cultivated few—to university scholars, authors, clergymen, lawyers, physicians, and college graduates generally. Though at the farthest remove from pedantry or stiffness, his writing, polished, allusive, with a keen wit or irony playing across it, required a cultured understanding for its full appreciation. Addressing himself to this narrow constituency, he had an influence easily the greatest of its kind in the history of our journalism.

Foremost among the qualities which gave him this power, his friend of many years, Prof. A. V. Dicey, placed his gift of appositeness, or instinctive discernment of the question of the moment. He had this gift as clearly as Greeley, or Cobbett. His editorial page was kept constantly focussed upon the changing issues of the time. Godkin had no desire to be a voice crying in the wilderness, and knew that his influence would be lost if he wrote about international arbitration when men were thinking of the tariff. Prof. Dicey failed to add that he often helped powerfully toward putting an issue in the foreground. In 1890 he made Tammany a burning public question months before the city campaign; the *Post* was the first paper to show, in the early nineties, that a contest between jingoes and lovers of peace was taking shape; and he insisted that the free silver battle must be fought out when many Republican politicians were sneaking off the field. He knew how the public mind was moving before the public did. Supplementary to his gift for appositeness was his great skill in reiteration. No small part of the power of the *Evening Post* and *Nation*

was simply a power of attrition. Once convinced of the justice of a position, he was always, though with unfailing originality and freshness, harping upon it. This, of course, was one of the *Post's* irritating qualities for those who disagreed.

To the treatment of all subjects he brought a comprehensive and cosmopolitan knowledge of the world. He knew more than any other American editor about Europe because his personal knowledge of Europe ranged from Belfast, where he had been educated, to the Bosporus. He had lived in Paris, and written a youthful history of Hungary; when Bryce edited the Liberal Party's "Handbook of Home Rule," he was the only writer allotted two articles in it; he had many correspondents abroad, and in his later years spent long periods there. In this country he had seen much of ante-bellum and post-bellum society. Though a constant student, he learned only less from his intercourse with men of distinction, from Boston to Washington, than from books. His acquisitions regarding government, international affairs, politics, economics, and law gave him a clear advantage over even journalists like John Hay and Whitelaw Reid. On the other hand, he was handicapped by knowing comparatively little of the great common people, the unintellectual workers, from whose ranks Greeley, Bennett, and Raymond sprang. His Irish humor and sociability gave him some friends among them, but only a few.

Of his style it is easy to form a misapprehension. It was incisive, graphic, and pithy. But at all times it was simple, without the least straining for effect; he indulged in no rhetoric, he did not excel in epigram, as did Dana, and he had no desire to be brilliant in the sense of merely clever. It is true that one can easily find epigrams and witty flashes. On one occasion of much waving of the bloody shirt, he spoke of the rumors that there would be another war between North and South, the former led by Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan, the latter by Tom, Dick, and Harry. "There are reports from Washington," he wrote the fall of 1898, "that Hanna has told Duty to tell

Destiny to tell the President to keep the Philippines. We doubt it. We believe Destiny will lie low and say nothing till after election." He could condense an editorial into a single sentence. When Henry George, an ardent advocate of the confiscation of landed property, traveled in Ireland in the eighties, Godkin wrote: "A spark is in itself a harmless, pretty, and even useful thing, but a spark in a powder magazine is mischief in its most malignant form." But the prevailing tone of his writings has been well said to be that "of an accomplished gentleman conversing with a set of intimates at his club." The thoughtful, neatly-put flow of argument or exposition was constantly lighted up by humor, and often varied by irony or invective.

The humor was always spontaneous, and could be either genial or scorching. He had a remarkable faculty for humorous imagery. It was the most natural thing in the world for him to compare the Tammany panic over the *Evening Post* biographies with the introduction of a ferret into a rat cellar. Sometimes the image was elaborate. Thus, to show the folly of saddling the President with the appointment of thousands of postmasters, he wrote of "The President as Sheik," comparing him with the Arab chief who sat under the big tree outside the city gate, ordering the bazaar thief to jail, hearing what the widow said of the knavish baker, and giving the good public official a robe of honor. When Cleveland's friends explained his Venezuela message by the theory that he was forestalling a warlike message by Congress, Godkin remarked: "Foreseeing that Congress would shortly get drunk, he determined by way of cure to anticipate their bout by one of his own, feeling that his own recovery would be speedier and less costly than theirs. But the result was that they joined in his carouse, and they both went to work to smash the national furniture and crockery."

Of his unequalled gift for compressing a homily into a humorous or ironical paragraph two examples will suffice, both written with typical gusto:

The scenes attending the burial of the late Jesse James on Thursday, at Kearney, Mo., were very affecting. Crowds of people flocked together from all parts of the State to get a last sight of the dead bandit, who had done so much to enable them to lead what they call in Boston "full" lives. Mrs. Samuels, Jesse's mother, was on the ground early, and talked without reserve to everyone. Her conversation naturally, under the circumstances, was colored with deep religious feeling, and she said to a reporter, who in his shy way ventured to express his sympathy with her bereavement, "I knew it had to come; but my dear boy Jesse is better off in heaven today than he would be here with us"—a sentiment from which no one will be likely to dissent. The officiating clergyman with much tact avoided dwelling on the life and character of the deceased, and improved the occasion by enlarging upon Jesse's chance of future improvement in Paradise, in a manner that would probably have struck Mr. James himself as rather mawkish. The widespread belief in the West that he has gone straight to heaven is a touching indication of the general softening of religious doctrines. (April, 1882.)

The anarchists had a picnic on Sunday at Weehawken Heights . . . An entrance fee of 25 cents was required to gain admission to the picnic. A practical anarchist came along and attempted to enter without paying the fee. Some accounts say that he was a policeman in citizens' clothes, but this is immaterial from the anarchists' point of view, however important it may be in a Jersey court of justice. True anarchy required that the man should enter without paying, especially if there was any regulation requiring pay. Taking toll at the gate is only one of the forms of law and order which anarchy rails at and seeks to abolish. . . . The gatekeeper called for help and some of his minions came forward with pickets hastily torn from the fence, and began beating the practical man over the head. Then the crowd outside began to throw stones at the crowd inside, and the latter retorted in kind. A few pistols were fired, and one boy was shot through the hand. The meeting was a great success in the way of promoting practical anarchy, the rioting being protracted to a late hour in the afternoon. Anarchy, like charity, should always begin at home. (June, 1887.)

As these paragraphs suggest, Godkin was a master of that two-edged editorial weapon, irony, which in clumsy hands may mortally wound the user. But his most superb

writing was that in which he delivered a straightforward attack upon some evil institution or person. His Irish sense for epithet enabled him to pierce the hide of the toughest pachyderms in Tammany; his caustic characterization could make an ordinary opponent wither up like a leaf touched with vitriol. One of his younger associates once found a man of prominence sick in bed from the pain and mortification an attack by Godkin had given him.

When Don Piatt asked the elder Bowles to define the essential qualities of an editor, the latter replied, "Brains and ugliness," meaning by the last word love of combat. Godkin had a truly Celtic zest for battle. Mr. Bishop declares that nothing interested him more than what he called "journalistic rows." Great was his delight, for example, when the *Times* and *Sun* clashed over an exploring expedition the former sent to Alaska, the *Sun* remarking that it was appropriate to name a certain river after Editor Jones of the *Times* because it was preternaturally shallow and muddy, and discolored the sea for miles from its mouth, and the *Times* attacking Dana for "the calculated malice of splenetic age." Godkin had an irresistible desire to mingle in such shindies. Once in, he would read all the harsh criticism offered of him, and fairly radiating his pleasure, would say: "What a delightful lot they are! We must stir them up again!" His gusto in attacking Tammany was evident to every reader. In each Presidential election he carried the war into the enemy's country with a rush, and printed three editorials attacking the other candidate to every one advocating his own. On one of his return trips from Europe he and the other passengers of the *Normanna* were held in quarantine because of a cholera scare and finally carried down to Fire Island for a prolonged stay under conditions of great discomfort. His letters to the *Evening Post* were delightfully scorching, he kept up the attack till the quarantine officers were panic-stricken, and he demolished their last defense in an article in the *North American Review* that is a masterpiece of destructiveness.

Godkin was at pains to state his belief that attacks

upon any evil should be as concrete and personal as possible. As he said, there was no point in writing flowery descriptions of the Upright Judge, or indignant denunciations of Judicial Corruption. The proper course was to show by book and chapter the misdeeds or incompetence of Tammany judges like Maynard, Barnard, and Cardozo, and chase them from the bench. For one person interested in an assault on poor quarantine regulations, ten would be interested in an assault on Dr. Jenkins, the quarantine head. Godkin had his own Ananias Club. His attacks on the Knights of Labor always included some hearty thrusts at their chief, Powderly. His hatred of the pensions grabbing led him to make a close investigation of the record of the most notorious grabber of all, Corporal Tanner, the man who said, "God help the Surplus!" when he became Pensions Commissioner. The editor took prodigious pleasure in exposing Tanner as a noisy fellow who had lost his leg from a stray shot while, a straggler from his regiment, he was lying under an apple tree reading in what he thought a safe place.

Godkin was well aware that both his humor and his belligerency sometimes carried him beyond the mark. More than once he assigned a topic to a subordinate, saying, "I'd do it, but I don't trust my discretion." In the heat of the Blaine campaign he wrote a paragraph stating a charge that was quite unfounded, and went home; luckily his associates saw it early, recognized that it would damage their cause, and substituted another before the forms closed. Next day Godkin was effusive in his gratitude. It is recalled that once the editorial staff objected stubbornly to part of one of his editorials, and after protracted argument, he consented to delete it. When the next edition appeared with the offending passage still there, he was excited and furious, and called the foreman of the composing room down to explain why his orders for killing it had not been obeyed. The foreman protested that he had received no such orders. Knowing associates at once went to Mr. Godkin's desk, and found that he had written them out and absently tossed

them into the waste basket. But Godkin's occasional excesses of temper were the defect of a rare virtue. A capacity for righteous anger like his is all too uncommon in journalism, the pulpit, or public life generally. Roosevelt never forgave Godkin for the unvarying contempt and bitterness, the unwearied bluntness of accusation, with which he wrote of Quay; but who that knows what Quay was would say that the editor showed a jot too much harshness?

Godkin was reared in the faith of Manchester Liberalism, and his main principles were of that school to the end. At his college (Queens', Belfast), he tells us, "John Stuart Mill was our prophet, and Grote and Bentham were our daily food. In fact, the late Neilson Hancock, who was our professor of political economy and jurisprudence, made Bentham his textbook. . . . I and my friends were filled with the teachings of the *laissez-faire* school and had no doubt that its recent triumph in the abolition of the Corn Laws was sure to lead to wider ones in other countries."

When he came to America, he brought with him all the rooted opposition of the Manchester school to protection and state subsidy. He shared not only Mill's and Cobden's belief in free trade, but their detestation of war, reënforced by his own Crimean experiences. Like Mill, he was a warm advocate of colonial autonomy and the general spread of political freedom. In his last years, he declared that he had always believed "that the Irish people should learn self-government in the way in which the English have learned it, and the Americans have learned it; in which, only, any race can learn it—by practicing it." He was long a believer in minority or proportional representation, naming it in 1870 as one of the three great objects of the *Nation*. Another of these objects, civil service reform, he took up just after the Civil War, struck by the contrast between our corrupt and incompetent administrative system and the efficient, experienced British civil service. The introduction of the Australian ballot, the enactment of better election laws,

the reform of municipal government, were prominently pushed forward by Godkin. He thoroughly agreed with the Manchester jealousy of government interference in economic and industrial affairs, holding that unless required by some great and general good, it was a certain evil.

These were Godkin's principles, and by principles he always steered his course. Greeley often did not know his own mind, Bennett and Dana had little regard for principle, but Godkin always held fixed objects before him. A contemporary historian, Harry Thurston Peck, in "Twenty Years of the Republic," writes: "It is not too much to say that nearly all the most important questions of American political history from 1881 to 1896 got their first public hearing largely through the influence of Mr. Godkin." That is an exaggeration, but an exaggeration made possible by his tenacious championship of a dozen causes at a time when general opinion was interested but skeptical. To be sure, the ingrained nature of some of his principal doctrines was a limitation. It prevented him from being a powerfully original thinker in the field of government and politics. He taught our intellectual public lessons which he had learned from the more advanced practice and thought of Great Britain, and far beyond that he did not go. But this limitation can easily be exaggerated. He was an omnivorous reader, his curiosity in new ideas and movements was intense, and he had a really open mind.

In most ways he kept quite abreast of the times, and in some well ahead of it. He looked much farther than the ordinary liberal into the relationship between powerful nations and the weaker or inferior peoples, for he perceived the affinities between economic conquest and political conquest. His editorials upon intervention in Egypt in 1882 show that he had no patience with the view that one government might bully another to protect the investments of its nationals. He did believe that British intervention was justified upon other grounds, and always maintained that Cromer's rule there, like English rule

in India, was a boon to the native and the world. But in Africa, Asia, and in Cuba, he was always angered by any evidence that selfish interests—traders, coal concessionaires, investors—were using a strong government as a catspaw to menace or subvert a weak one.

His writings upon capitalism show a steady development of ideas. He objected to demagoguish attacks upon Capital, a word which he disliked, saying that if people called it Savings they would have fewer misconceptions. But he was no more inclined to defend abuses by capital than abuses by labor. He argued for the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission in his first year with the *Post*. He was more and more alarmed by the trusts, both as instruments of economic oppression, and as dangerous influences upon the government. He wanted evil combinations sharply attacked and broken up—not "regulated"—to prevent monopoly, and in later years much of his zeal in attacking the high tariff sprang from his conviction that it and the trusts were mutual supports. No one inveighed more constantly than he against ill-gotten wealth, or against the abuse of money power. His editorial on the death of Peter Cooper, who used to boast that he never made a dollar he could not take up to the Great White Throne, was one of a long series of arguments for a public sentiment that would distinguish between honest success and dishonest "success," between Peter Cooper and Jay Gould. The chief peril to the republic, he wrote in 1886, was worship of wealth:

> It is here that our greatest danger lies. The popular hero today, whom our young men in cities most admire and would soonest imitate, is neither the saint, the sage, the scholar, the soldier, nor the statesman, but the successful stock-gambler. Stocks and bonds are the commonest of our dinner-table topics. The man we show with most pride to foreigners is the man who has made most millions. Our wisest men are those who can draw the biggest checks; and—what is worst of all—there is a growing tendency to believe that everybody is entitled to whatever he can buy, from the Presidency down to a street-railroad franchise.

Godkin was a keen-eyed social observer, discussing thoughtfully a multitude of topics affecting the daily life and culture of the people. He did not believe in prohibition, arguing throughout his editorship against the Maine law. But he did recognize in the saloon an enormous evil, politically and socially, he wanted it lessened by high licenses, and utterances could be quoted which suggest that he might ultimately have accepted even prohibition as better than the saloon's continuance. He disbelieved in woman suffrage for two principal reasons, because he feared it would further debase the government of our large cities, and because the great majority of women in his day were indifferent to it. On social abuses of all kinds he used the lash unsparingly. His campaign against public spitting, upon grounds of sanitation as well as cleanliness, was potent in abolishing the spittoon. For years he kept up a vigorous effort to shame the South out of its tolerant attitude toward homicide. He had been shocked by this attitude when he traveled in the South in 1856-57, and the war and Reconstruction had made it worse. His method was characteristic. Every time one Southerner shot another because of a quarrel over a dog, or a rail fence, or a hasty word—which was every few days—he wrote an editorial paragraph recounting the circumstances, with ironic comment. He dwelt upon the bloody details, the "gloom" that pervaded the community, and the certainty that nothing would be done to bring the murderer to trial. For several years early in the eighties this campaign gave the editorial page of the *Post* a decided mortuary flavor. Part of the Southern press was enraged, declaring that the *Post* was maliciously attempting to prevent emigration southward; but it got below the skin of the section with salutary effect.

Certain of Godkin's utterances upon labor problems show the unfortunate effect of part of his early training. They had not only the fallacies of the *laissez faire* position, but were harshly put. He had a way of speaking of workmen, when they displeased him, as "ignorant,"

"idle," "reckless," indicting them *en masse*. In 1887, writing contemptuously of a strike "of coalheavers, longshoremen, and the like," he spoke of the men who respond to labor agitators as "a large, passionate, ignorant, and through their ignorance, very discontented and uncomfortable constituency." For years in the eighties, when labor was struggling toward effective organization, he declared that its agitators were producing a cowardice among politicians, ministers, and philanthropists like that the slavery leaders produced before the Civil War. He was one of those who thought the early career of Prof. Richard T. Ely dangerously incendiary. He repeatedly denied that strikers had the right to post pickets around an employer's premises. He denied them the right to accuse an employer of paying an unjust wage, or taking an undue share of profits, saying that a strike should be regarded as "a simple failure of business men to agree to a bargain" (May, 1886). Labor was guilty of many crimes and abuses, from dynamiting to boycotts, in those days. But it would be hard to find a more unfair statement of the labor movement, 1876-1896, than Godkin wrote in the latter year (Sept. 2):

> Labor as a "question" was twenty years ago new in America. . . . It gradually grew in political and social importance. Politicians began to preach that employers were great rascals if they did not allow laborers to stay in their service on their own terms. They were backed up by a swarm of "ethical" economists and clergymen all over the country, who found something hideously wrong in the existing state of society, and proclaimed the obligation, not simply of the employer, but of the state and society, to do all sorts of nice things for the laborer; to carry him about for nothing, to pay him for his labor what he should judge to be sufficient, to provide all sorts of comforts and luxuries for him at the public expense, on what was called "broad public grounds." This insanity raged for several years. It was preached from thousands of pulpits. "Papers" were read on it at all sorts of clubs, societies, and reunions, showing the wrongs done to the manual laborer by everybody else. Under its influence Powderly and his Knights of Labor grew into a great power. . . .
>
> This particular "craze" lasted till the Chicago riots of 1893,

and the appearance on the scene of Altgeld as the Governor of a great State. People then saw the fruits of their teaching. Large bodies of ignorant and thoughtless men had believed it and acted on it. In order to settle a small dispute between a sleeping car company and its men, they determined to suspend locomotion throughout the business regions of a great nation. They believed they were in the right. If the account given of labor by the clergymen and ethical economists were true, they had the right to do what they were doing. For some days the government of the United States seemed to be suspended. But when one courageous man stepped to the front, and said this nonsense should cease, it suddenly stopped. The sermons and "papers" and ethical economy stopped too.

Godkin rejoiced when the Knights of Labor disintegrated, and said nothing in praise of the work it did in clearing the ground for the A. F. of L., or in hastening the eight-hour day, the abolition of contract labor, and the establishment of labor bureaus. A similar want of sympathy was evident in much he wrote of the farmers. In fact, he imbibed with his British training a strong consciousness of class, which made him speak of manual workers and small tradesmen as inferiors. An editorial deprecating a liberal education for children of the poor, easily accessible in files of the *Nation* (Dec. 23, 1886) is a curious example of his inability to understand the American denial of any permanent class lines. As a good liberal, he believed that labor must be strongly organized, but if he had any real feeling for it, it seldom appeared. He was a philosophic democrat, but not a practical democrat. His editorials, joined with certain well-known personal traits—his great care in dress, his fastidiousness in food, his intellectual aloofness—led many to think him a snob; a term that was misleading, for no one was less a respecter of persons. They inspired the well-known verses of McCready Sykes, beginning:

> Godkin the righteous, known of old,
> Priest of the nation's moral health,
> Within whose *Post* we daily read
> The Gospel of the Rights of Wealth.

In denying that Godkin was a pessimist, we must not deny that he was sometimes atrabilious. Scattered through his letters are remarks that indicate moods of deep discouragement. "I am tired of having to be continually hopeful," he wrote after the election of 1897, and again in 1899: "Our present political condition is repulsive to me." It was his business to be censorious—to make the *Nation,* as Charles Dudley Warner said, "the weekly judgment day." But as Howells writes, practically he was one of the most hopeful of men, for he was always striving to make a bad world better. He deeply resented the charge that the *Evening Post* was merely a destructive critic, and used to challenge any one to cite an instance in which it had exposed an evil without suggesting a remedy. The commotion following the death of Garfield brought from him a notable expression of faith in our national stability. He recalled that the same calamity had occurred before, when the country was in the midst of the greatest convulsion of the century, with a million troops under arms, a colossal debt, and terrible problems awaiting solution; that a stubborn, uneducated man had become President, and for three years had quarreled violently with Congress; and yet that all had ended prosperously. Mr. Bishop was surprised on election day, in 1884, to see the calm serenity with which Godkin awaited the result of the Blaine-Cleveland contest, but Godkin remarked, with intense conviction: "I have been sitting here for twenty years and more, placing faith in the American people, and they have never gone back on me yet, and I do not believe they will now." He himself used to laugh at the talk of his pessimism, remarking that when he lived in Cambridge, people said that he and Norton were accustomed to sit at night and talk until at about 2 a. m. the gloom would get so thick that all the dogs in town would start howling.

In the reminiscences that death prevented him from expanding, he made a brief survey of contemporary American civilization in a tone anything but discouraged. He believed that in government the United States had lost

ground. The people cared less about politics, were less instructed regarding administration, and had allowed themselves to become the tools of the bosses; while the old race of great statesmen had died out. He also thought that the press had ceased to have much influence on opinion, and that the pulpit had become singularly demagogic. On the other hand, he declared that the advance of higher education, qualitatively and quantitatively, was without a parallel in all previous world history. "And," he added, "the progress of the nation generally in all the arts, except that of government, in literature, in commerce, in invention, is something unprecedented, and becomes daily more astonishing."

As to the character and extent of Godkin's influence there is no uncertainty. Exerted directly upon the leaders of opinion, it was felt indirectly by the whole population. All over the country he convinced isolated and outstanding men, who in turn diffused his views throughout their own communities. No man who once fell under the sway of his powerful pen, even those whom he intensely irritated, could quite shake it off. One eminent New Yorker was heard to call the *Post* "that pessimistic, malignant, and malevolent sheet—which no good citizen ever goes to bed without reading!" The thinking young men of the colleges, and many outside them, accepted his utterances as an almost infallible guide. No public man was indifferent to them. The *Evening Post* and *Nation* long exercised a peculiar sway in newspaper offices from Maine to California. Gov. David B. Hill remarked to a secretary during the fight Godkin was waging against his machine: "I don't care anything about the handful of Mugwumps who read it in New York City. The trouble with the damned sheet is that every editor in New York State reads it!" It was a Western editor who said that only a bold newspaper made up its mind on any new issue till it saw what the *Post* had to say. "For years," a Baltimore friend wrote Godkin in 1899, "I have noticed your editorials reappearing unacknowledged, a little changed and somewhat diluted, but still with their original integrity

not entirely removed from them, in the columns of other papers—a course of *Post*-and-water not equal to the strong meat from which the decoction was made, but still wholesome. . . ." Henry Holt wrote the editor on his retirement that he had taught the country more than any other man in it. The same tribute was paid him by William James: "To my generation, his was certainly the towering influence in all thought concerning public affairs, and indirectly his influence has certainly been more pervasive than that of any other writer of the generation, for he influenced other writers who never quoted him, and determined the whole current of discussion."

Such verdicts, from such men, might be multiplied to a wearisome length. The finest spirits of the time recognized in Godkin, though they often disagreed with him, though the disagreement might sometimes be violent, the most inspiring force in American journalism.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

NEWS, LITERATURE, MUSIC, AND DRAMA, 1880-1900

FROM Godkin's utterances upon journalism a small volume might easily be compiled. His ideal of a newspaper was as much English as American, with a good deal that was purely Godkinian superadded. He disliked headlines, even when not garish, and valued the headline merely as an aid to reference. He insisted upon absolute accuracy. Not only did he believe, quite properly, that comment had no place in a news story, but he thought any attempt at literary effects out of place there—that information was the one essential. Recognizing that accuracy often requires expert knowledge, he always insisted that this could be got by paying for it. Absolute integrity in every department was of course presupposed. Murat Halstead in 1889 told the Wisconsin Press Association that he saw no objection if readers "should find out that the advertiser occasionally dictates the editorials." "No objection at all to that," rejoined Godkin; "the objection is when they don't find it out."

During the eighties Dana and the *Sun* represented to Godkin nearly all that was evil in New York journalism, and the exchanges between the two editors were often bitter. Neither appreciated the other's qualities. Everyone remembers Mrs. Frederick P. Bellamy's explanation of the depravity of New York: "What can you expect of a city in which every morning the *Sun* makes vice attractive, and every night the *Post* makes virtue odious?" Dana found Godkin the one antagonist who could make him wince, and struck back hard. He persisted in calling the editor "Larry." He never tired of exaggerating the *Post's* staidness. When it changed its form in 1887, he wrote that it would now be dull in sixteen pages instead of eight. After one of the East River bridges was

opened, he described the testing of the structure at length; how wagons of stone, trucks of metal, and ponderous engines were trundled across it, and finally, as the supreme burden, a cart bearing a copy of the *Evening Post*. When S. J. Randall died, and the *Post* spoke of his corrupting influence upon Congress, Dana seized the opportunity to characterize Godkin as "a scurrilous editor known to the police courts of this town as a libeler of the living, and who is known now as a defamer of the dead."

What Godkin principally objected to in the *Sun*, of course, was Dana's cynical defense of evils and his opposition to a long list of good causes. Supposedly a Democrat, Dana conceived a violent and irrational dislike of Cleveland, did his best in 1884 to defeat him, and later never missed an opportunity to attack him as the "Stuffed Prophet" or "Perpetual Candidate." Supposedly a friend of decency in the city, for twenty years he was Tammany's staunchest champion, a supporter in turn of Tweed's associates, of Boss Kelly, of Grant and Gilroy, and of Croker. Standing for civil service reform in 1876, later he attacked and ridiculed reform measures unmercifully. Every attempt to improve politics elicited a burst of derision from him. The perversity of his course, its lack of principle, Godkin repeatedly exposed in columns of extracts from the *Sun* headed "Semper Fidelis."

But he objected in almost equal degree to the *Sun's* news columns—to the space they gave crime and scandal. Dana used to say that whatever God allowed to happen he would allow to be printed, and talked of giving a full picture of society. How far this creed carried him, and how caustically Godkin censured it, may be seen from one *Evening Post* paragraph (Sept. 28, 1886):

> The first page of our enterprising contemporary, the *Sun*, today was an interesting picture of American society. The first column was devoted to the trial of a minister for immorality, to differences between a man named Lynch and his wife, to a rape in a vacant lot, and a suicide. The second was half given to a fire and the death of a blind newsdealer, the other half to politics. The third was given up to foreign news and politics, but half the

fourth was taken up with murder in a buggy and the escape of two convicts. The fifth was wholly devoted to a very paying scandal about Lord Lonsdale and Miss Violet Cameron and a small item about another Lord Lonsdale and twenty-four chorus girls. In the remaining two, we find the disappearance of one Sniffers, a divorce, two pugilistic items, half a column of the horse-whipping of a reporter by a girl, the discovery of her lover in jail by Miss Miller, the arrest of a small swindler, and a few other trifles. As a microcosm, the page is not often surpassed. . . .

As Godkin said, the news of the most sensational papers gave an essentially false picture of American society. Any one who read it as a well-proportioned picture of what was happening in New York would believe that every evening about 10,000 betrayed servant girls, horse-whipped faithless lovers, and the same number of drunken husbands murdered wives in tenement houses; and that the bulk of the population was daily occupied in getting at the details of such cases, and wanted explanatory illustrations to help it, such as diagrams showing just where the servant girl stood when she struck the first blow. In a true picture, such incidents would get a few lines.

But when sensational news was obtained by inventing it, or exaggerating small episodes, or heartless intrusion into private affairs, Godkin's indignation was much greater. His opinion of this phase of journalism was precisely that which Howells expresses of Bartley Hubbard's unscrupulous news-gathering in "A Modern Instance." In June, 1886, he paid his respects to "those delightful creatures who lurked behind fences and hid in the bushes two weeks ago, watching the house" where Cleveland was passing his honeymoon. More than one New York journal at that time would fabricate interviews with men its reporters could not reach. One remedy for the current abuses, Godkin thought, lay in stringent enforcement of the laws for libel. In 1893 an invented scandal about a Toronto lady and gentleman resulted in the payment of $14,537 damages by three New York papers, and Godkin declared that it was a public service for injured persons thus to bring suit. On another occa-

ROLLO OGDEN
Editor-in-Chief 1903-1920.

sion he wrote: "Some of the most highly paid laborers of our time are lying newspaper reporters and correspondents, men who make no pretense of telling the truth, and would smile if you reproached them with not doing so."

In the nineties Godkin's distaste for the *Sun's* news was forgotten in his more intense reprobation of the so-called yellow press, the old *World* and *Journal.* He thought that their sensational attention to crime and immorality was shocking, that they were much more careless of truth than the *Sun,* and that their pictures and cartoons showed a new defect—the defect of puerility. They did go for a time to startling lengths. "The note of the press to-day which most needs changing is childishness," wrote Godkin in May, 1896. "The pictures are childish; the intelligence is mainly for boys and girls. . . . The observations on public as distinguished from purely party affairs are quite juvenile." When a number of city clubs and public libraries excluded the *World* and *Journal* from their reading rooms, Godkin applauded, holding that the new sensationalism could be stopped only by a vigorous public sentiment. He was deeply concerned, like many other sober men, over the intellectual effect of the cheap, widely read yellow sheets. They were making it impossible for the masses to read anything very long on any subject, he said, and to read anything, long or short, on any serious subject. They fed the people brief thrillers about shootings and assaults, titbits of scandal, bogus interviews, and comic aspects of every institution from Christianity down; and when the attention grew jaded, they offered pictures for tired minds. In this there was much truth, though the history of the *World* shows what an enormous force for good lay in the new journalism.

The sober news pages of the *Evening Post* were the product of a small force—never in Godkin's day more than a half-dozen full-time reporters. But it was a remarkably efficient, well-managed force. During the nineties in particular it reached a very high level of enterprise. The managing editor from 1891 to the end of the decade was William A. Linn, who had succeeded James E.

Learned. Linn had been with the *Tribune* from 1868 to 1871, and with the *Post* ever since, and had remarkable knowledge of his craft. His city editor from 1892 to 1898 was H. J. Wright, who was born in Scotland, graduated at New York University, and had worked on the *Commercial Advertiser.* These two found several capable men in the city room, added others, and infused an unusual *esprit de corps* in them. Wright's vigor was infectious; he showed, says Norman Hapgood, "a great deal of tolerance, hard work, and enthusiasm, and a liking for intelligences of many kinds around him."

The three most remarkable reporters of these years were Lincoln Steffens, Norman Hapgood, and W. L. Riardon, two of whom have made their mark in the higher reaches of journalism. Riardon was the political reporter. He had been trained for the Catholic priesthood, but weakness for drink and a talent for newswriting had derailed him. He was a member of Tammany Hall, and invaluable in getting material for assaults upon it. Yet his perfect accuracy and fairness shielded him from any resentment in that quarter. "He has to earn a living like the rest of us," Croker would say whenever a particularly biting story about Tammany appeared in the *Post.* One of his merits was that he never failed to bring home news; if there was nothing in the assignment he went to cover, he would get a story as good or better somewhere else. Moreover, he never wrote himself out. On Friday, when a special column was often needed for Saturday's enlarged paper, Riardon could always be counted on to have something worth while up his sleeve.

Steffens, a young Californian, who had studied in Germany and France, joined the staff on the recommendation of Mr. Bishop in 1892, and after some special reporting on rapid transit, was given a year in Wall Street at the beginning of the panic. When first sent down there, the regular Wall Street reporter being abroad, he asked for references to three or four leading bankers. "Calling on them," he tells us, "I explained the predicament of the

Post and my utter ignorance of finance and business. But I said that, if they would coach me from day to day, I would read up, study, work, and I promised in return for the trouble I might put them to, I would report even the most sensational happenings quietly and carefully. The agreement was made; I took the job, and though that had not been my purpose, the effect of the bankers' interest in me was that we had many, many beats." Later he was assigned to Police Headquarters at the height of the excitement over the Lexow Inquiry. His work in following the new Police Commission, of which Roosevelt was chairman, was of peculiar value to the public. This four-headed commission was always deadlocking. The obstructiveness of one member was such that the Mayor attempted his removal, but the Governor interfered to prevent it. Steffens for the *Post* and Jacob Riis for the *Sun* laid full reports of the Board's activities before the public, and brought a great deal of public sentiment to bear behind Roosevelt. Steffens was a born newspaper man, sharply observant, vivid in description, full of humor, and with a thorough knowledge of the town.

Of his rapidity and capacity Norman Hapgood furnishes an interesting illustration. One day the 17-story Ireland building collapsed:

It fell down just about three-quarters of an hour before we went to press. There was nobody in the office except me. Mr. Wright was in despair. This was before I had developed, rather suddenly, into a reporter. As far as a story of this kind went, I was in the sub-cub stage. Nevetheless, Mr. Wright had to send me. When I reached the scene of the disaster, I saw Steffens talking to somebody concerned—I think two or three policemen. I went up to him and in quite a leisurely way asked him what information he had. He had come to know me, and be rather amused by my detached ways, so he smiled slightly, never thought of answering me, and went on with his work. I got a few points, went back to the office, and turned in about one stick of inconsequential detail. About five or ten minutes before press time, Steffens called up on the telephone. When he heard of the disaster he had not taken the trouble to phone Mr. Wright, but

went direct to the spot. The paper was held fifteen or twenty minutes, and in less than half an hour's dictation by phone Steffens had covered the catastrophe, given all its drama, told everything in an orderly, expert manner, and not missed a detail. There was not a morning paper that had an account as good.

Hapgood began on space, making about $12 a week at first; but he soon developed into the best general reporter Mr. Wright ever knew. He could write shorthand, and was particularly effective in taking interviews, addresses, and trial reports in the English style. He, and every other reporter, found that the absolute trustworthiness of the paper made men of affairs willing to give it news they denied to other dailies. The treatment of one "beat" which he procured is a happy illustration of the *Post's* studious avoidance of anything that would seem noisy. He was well acquainted with some of the leaders of the Salvation Army, and at the time when the public was most interested in the question whether Ballington Booth was going to break with his father, Hapgood received absolute knowledge that he was. Turning in a story on the general situation, he inserted a short paragraph in the middle giving this statement. Mr. Wright was tempted to pick it out and put it at the head of the column. Then he laughed, said he would leave it where it was, and called attention to it only by a minor headline.

During the Spanish War the *Post* had a creditable quota of correspondents with the Cuban forces. A. G. Robinson sent accounts of camp life at Jacksonville and Key West; Franklin Clarkin was with Sampson's fleet and later in the Santiago trenches; and John Bass was also at Santiago. The most remarkable of the lot, however, was E. G. Bellairs, as he called himself, who got into Cuba at Nuevitas aboard a blockade-runner from the Bahamas, and was soon sending up remarkable accounts of his adventures among the insurgents. He fell sick, his servant dug a grave for him and departed, and he was rescued by an old woman who fed him miraculous steaks and meat jellies—miraculous, that is, until he observed that his mule had disappeared. Bellairs was dismissed

for cause, and it later turned out that his name was an alias, covering a criminal record; but he had high merits as a correspondent. The Associated Press promptly employed him. The *Post* showed its customary quietness when Sampson destroyed Cervera's fleet. That event occurred Sunday, July 3, and the morning papers on the Fourth had very meager news; but the day being a legal holiday, the *Post* refused to issue any edition. Later it had full and prompt correspondence from the Philippines, a spot in which its editors were keenly interested.

Much of the *Evening Post's* news value was always furnished by certain unrivaled special features—unrivaled not only in New York, but the whole country. Perhaps the chief, and certainly the most effective in maintaining the circulation, was the financial department. Alexander Dana Noyes, who came from the *Commercial Advertiser* to be financial editor in 1891, and held that post till 1920, gave new credit to Whiting's pages, and ably supplemented Horace White in the editorial discussion of financial questions. As far west as Chicago, and as far south as Atlanta his columns were looked to daily as the best on industry and finance printed.

A position of equal preëminence was held by the *Evening Post's* literary department, the record of which repays examination in detail. Falling heir in 1881 to the literary editor and traditions of the *Nation,* the *Post* became the first American newspaper to publish book criticism that was consistently expert, discriminating, and of high literary quality. James Bryce doubted whether there was any criticism in the world as good as the old *Nation's.* By 1881 some of the greatest of Godkin's original contributors, as Henry James and Lowell, were no longer writing for it. But in spite of such defections, the list was impressively weighty and comprehensive, and the *Post* had every worthy book reviewed by an authority in the field in which it lay. In fact, the dominant tone of its literary pages was authoritativeness—it was not clever, it was not newsy, but it was definitive.

In large part this meant that the reviewing was by

university scholars, and the academic tone of the writing, in the best sense of the word, had much to do with the esteem for the *Evening Post* in academic circles. People who wanted bright belletristic literary pages were disappointed. Glancing down the roster of reviewers in the eighties, we find only two men known as novelists or writers of light essays, Joel Chandler Harris and Edward Eggleston. There was a decided deficiency in news of literary personalities, and discussions of current literary movements. But all the great institutions of learning were ably represented. It is sufficient to take Harvard as an example. Her contributors included:

Alexander Agassiz, H. P. Bowditch, Edward Channing, Francis J. Child, Ephraim Emerton, C. H. Grandgent, J. B. Greenough, Albert Bushnell Hart, William James, Charles R. Lanman, Charles Eliot Norton, George H. Palmer, Josiah Royce, N. S. Shaler, F. W. Taussig, J. D. Whitney, Justin Winsor.

Outside the universities, we find among the reviewers the names of historians like Parkman, Henry Adams, Henry C. Lea, John C. Ropes, and John Fiske; a number of men in the Federal service, like the archæologist A. F. Bandelier, the astronomer Simon Newcomb, Henry Gannett, and J. R. Soley; and writers of reputation in various fields like George E. Woodberry, T. W. Higginson, W. C. Brownell, Kenyon Cox, Brander Matthews, H. H. Furness, and Angelo Heilprin. The fare was not sufficiently varied by light and elegant features—one rule was not to accept any poetry—but it was of the best possible quality.

The literary editor from 1881 to 1903 was Wendell Phillips Garrison, who had been with the *Nation* since its founding in 1865, and had early taken charge of the reviews. His name is indissolubly linked with Godkin's. "If anything goes wrong with you, I will retire into a monastery," the editor wrote in 1883. "You are the one steady and constant man I have ever had to do with." He is not remembered, like R. H. Hutton of the London *Spectator,* the only literary editor of the time superior to

him, for permanently valuable literary criticism. His distinction lay in his keen judgment in selecting reviewers, his ability to inspire them, his careful scholarship, and his skill in making homogeneous the work sent to him.

Both to his associates in the office and distant contributors, Garrison was endeared by his tact and charm. When writing to reviewers, he was wont to include some personal word of friendship, often whimsical, which drew the recipients into an intimate circle. He thus built up a great family of *Evening Post* and *Nation* writers, from the Pacific Coast to St. Petersburg, more than two hundred of whom joined on the fortieth anniversary of his entrance upon journalism in presenting him a silver vase, inscribed by Goldwin Smith. Whenever Godkin caused a storm in the office, Garrison was expected to restore calm. A single example of his constant thoughtfulness may be given. H. T. Finck, the *Post's* music critic, while traveling in Switzerland one summer, was attacked in Berne by typhoid fever, and sent to the University Hospital. Garrison heard of his plight, immediately ascertained that the *Nation* had a subscriber in Berne, a wealthy cheese exporter, and wrote this gentleman of Mr. Finck's illness. The result was that the critic spent his convalescence in the subscriber's home.

By his tact and high ideals, Garrison made the learned world of the United States feel that the book pages of the *Evening Post* and *Nation* were a coöperative enterprise, which all scholars should take pride in keeping at the highest possible level. Their labors were scrupulously supplemented by his own, for his scholarship was rare and his exactness almost painful. He would send a telegram to settle the question of a hyphen. An authority upon punctuation and syllabication, he prepared the materials for an exhaustive treatise upon them, parts of which were printed in a memorial volume in 1908. Until May, 1888, much of the impeccable accuracy of the literary columns was attributable to the aid furnished by Michael Heilprin, a truly noble scholar who had been driven from Hungary by the collapse of the revolution of 1848-49, and

who just before the Civil War had connected himself with Appleton's Cyclopædia. He not only wrote many articles for the *Post* and *Nation*, but placed his marvelous scholarship at their service in the revision and proof-reading of articles by others. He had a reading-knowledge of eighteen languages. Taking a dictionary of dates, he could run his eye down the page and make corrections by the half-dozen. He could give the time and place of every battle and engagement in the Civil War, and "say his popes" without stumbling, a feat which even Macaulay declined to attempt. In history, biography, geography, and literature he commanded facts literally by the ten thousand.

One of the most striking traits of *Evening Post* criticism was the unity of tone which Garrison gave it. All reviews and nearly all general articles were anonymous. Godkin and Garrison held that an article by a named writer was not appreciated on its merits; that if he was famous, the veriest twaddle from his pen was devoured, while if he was obscure, nothing he wrote was read. The reviewers hence felt no temptation to air personal idiosyncrasies, and were the more ready to assume the *Post's* general point of view. Mr. Garrison chose his reviewer with the greatest care, and left him almost perfect freedom to say what he thought, secure in his discretion. For reasons of space he frequently had to use the blue pencil drastically, but though he called himself The Butcher he used it with tact.

When the *Evening Post* had a special titbit in the literary columns its rule of anonymity must have seemed a disadvantage. Thus in 1883 it published an article upon the death of Trollope, which even then would have made a greater impression upon readers had they known that its author was James Bryce. Bryce described the creator of Mrs. Proudie from personal acquaintance—"a genial, hearty, vigorous man, a typical Englishman in his face, his talk, his ideas, his tastes. His large eyes, which looked larger behind his large spectacles, were full of good-humored life and force; and though he was not witty nor

brilliant in conversation, he was what is called very good company, having traveled widely, known all sorts of people, and formed positive views on nearly every subject, which he was always ready to promulgate and maintain. There was not much novelty in them . . . but they were worth listening to for their solid sense, and you enjoyed the ardor with which he threw himself into a discussion." He had, Bryce added, no successor. Howells and James, though true artists, had not yet laid hold upon the general public; Miss Broughton's fine promise had not ripened; and "Mr. George Meredith, a strong and peculiar genius, who has a great fascination for those who will take the pains to follow him, remains unknown to the vast majority of novel readers."

When Gladstone died, Bryce's review of his career in the *Post* was signed. But it was regrettable that, after the demise of Darwin, the editors did not sign his name to his very interesting personal sketch of the great scientist:

I saw him at his home in Down last summer, and could not remember to have ever before seen him so bright, so cheerful, so full of talk. Feeble as his health had long been, he looked younger than his age, and had a freshness, an alertness of mind and eye, an interest in all passing affairs, which one seldom sees in men who are well past seventy. It was hard to believe that one was in the presence of so great and splendid a genius, for his manner was simple and natural as a child's. He did not speak with any air of authority, much less dogmatism, even on his own topics; and on other subjects, politics for instance, he talked as one who was only anxious to hear what others had to say and resolve his own doubts. One remark struck particularly the two friends who had come to see him. He mentioned that Mr. Gladstone had, some months before, while spending a Sunday in the neighborhood, walked over to call on him; and speaking with lively admiration of the Prime Minister's powers, he added: "It was delightful to see so great a man so simple and natural. He talked to us as one of ourselves; you would never have known what he was." We looked at one another, and thought that there were other great men of whom this was no less true, and in whom such self-forgetful simplicity was no less beautiful.

Nearly all the *Post's* obituary essays upon great American authors—Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Mrs. Stowe, and others—came from the chatty and interesting if not highly acute pen of Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The Paris correspondent was Auguste Laugel, who furnished a dozen letters every half-year upon politics and literature. Much English correspondence came from the noted jurist and Oxford teacher, A. V. Dicey, who reviewed many of the important English histories, biographies, and political works before they were published in America. Occasional long reviews were furnished by other Englishmen, as Leslie Stephen and Alfred Russell Wallace.

The best appraisals of current fiction were those contributed in the eighties by W. C. Brownell, whose estimates of important books like Henry James' "Portrait of a Lady" were almost perfect in their sanity, penetration, and literary grace. Unfortunately, he wrote rarely, and most reviews came from less distinguished hands. The *Evening Post* was always fervent in its admiration of Henry James's earlier manner, and it never took a patronizing tone toward Mark Twain, but it was long a bit suspicious of Howells, admitting his power but regarding his work as ugly. Brownell enthusiastically described "The Portrait of a Lady" as superior in moral quality to George Eliot, but the reviewers of Howells disliked his realism. The verdict upon "Silas Lapham" was that, except in its fine literary form, the novel had no beauty. "There is no inspiration for any one in the character of Silas Lapham. It rouses no tender or elevating emotion, stirs no thrill of sympathy, suggests no ideal of conduct, no notion that the world at large is or can be less ugly than Lapham himself. If it is to be conceded that Mr. Howells and his school are great artists in the highest reaches of their art, then the language is in sore need of words to define Sir Walter Scott and Thackeray." However, the writer admitted that the portrait of Lapham had a vividness and completeness unapproached in contemporary English fiction.

The essays and reviews of widest interest were probably those upon distinctly literary topics, and here the pens of George L. Kittredge, Thomas R. Lounsbury, Basil L. Gildersleeve, Charles Eliot Norton, and George E. Woodberry were especially in evidence. They wrote with charm upon a wide variety of books, and frequently with a special knowledge and interpretative insight that made their essays almost permanently significant. The most active reviewer of history and political biography was Gen. Jacob D. Cox, the works he treated ranging from the massive histories by Rhodes and Von Holst to lives of minor Civil War leaders. Cox himself wrote several books on the rebellion, and after the death of John C. Ropes—also a contributor—was easily the highest American authority upon its battles and strategy. Two other historians who assisted were Lea and Goldwin Smith. Wm. Graham Sumner wrote much on economics.

It is evident that the *Evening Post's* literary strength counted as a marked addition to its new value. Some books are not news, but most are; and if in no other American journal was there so little news of sensation, in none was there so much news of ideas. An outstanding review like that which J. D. Cox wrote of Bryce's "American Commonwealth" or Gamaliel Bradford of Woodrow Wilson's "Congressional Government" was news in the best sense. From all the important foreign capitals, not merely London and Paris, came constant news of the new publications, new intellectual movements, and new events in letters, art, and science. Until her death that remarkable Englishwoman, Jessie White Mario, wrote from Italy. The first American news of the production of Ibsen's "Ghosts" and the stir it caused was furnished in a long letter from Berlin in January, 1887, by C. H. Genung. Perhaps the outstanding illustration of this alertness of the *Evening Post* to intellectual news is its clear reflection throughout the eighties of the discovery of Russian literature by the Western world. It and the *Nation* did far more than all other periodicals combined to introduce Turgenev, Tolstoy, Gogol, and Dostoievsky

to the American public. As it remarked in 1886, when it published articles upon "Anna Karenina," "Childhood and Youth," "Crime and Punishment," and "The Insulted and Injured," the appearance of this new literature recalled the wonder of English readers when, in the time of Scott and Coleridge, German literature was first opened to them. Isabel Hapgood was long the St. Petersburg correspondent, while Auguste Laugel was in personal communication with not only De Vogué and other students of Russian letters, but with Turgenev.

The campaign which Bryant had carried on for an international copyright law was tirelessly maintained by Godkin and Garrison. After a time it appeared that cheap piracy was about to accomplish what argument had never done; that the disreputable pirates were ruining the business of respectable piracy, as carried on by Harper's and others. The latter paid a popular English author for the right to issue an authorized version, but within a week some printer who had paid nothing might be out with a cheaper edition which displaced the other. More and more publishers, therefore, joined in the crusade. Late in Arthur's Administration the judiciary committee of the House reported that the justice of an international copyright law was unquestionable, and Arthur, in his last annual message, urged the subject upon the attention of Congress. But as Godkin wrote, some clergyman was always ready to start up and announce that books were a property that God had meant to be stolen, and that it was only an oversight that they had not been excepted by name from the Ten Commandments; while some Western paper was always ready to prove that a copyright bill held a hidden villainy in behalf of the pampered noblemen who wrote and published books in England.

Godkin, growing deeply interested as the eighties passed, wrote with a vehemence which George Haven Putnam describes as invaluable in impressing most thoughtful citizens and legislators, but which actually antagonized some others, and which ultimately led to a *cause célèbre*. Prominent among the opponents of inter-

national copyright was the Rev. Dr. Isaac K. Funk, a leader of the Methodists and Prohibitionists, who gradually built up the great publishing business of Funk & Wagnalls. Dr. Funk mistakenly came to believe that a majority of Godkin's blows were aimed at his head, and he resented the fact that among all the exponents of piracy he should be singled out as a shining mark. In due time the editor, commenting on Funk's alleged piracy of an important English work, rather overstepped the mark and laid himself open to legal counterattack. Dr. Funk promptly brought suit for defamation and injury in the amount of $250,000. There was some consternation at the *Evening Post* office, where Godkin's attack was deemed legally indefensible, and Joseph H. Choate, who was retained to defend the editor, shared it. Indeed, he told Mr. Godkin that he could hardly expect to bring him off scot-free, but would try to hold the penalty to a nominal sum.

But by characteristic adroitness and audacity, especially in cross-examining Dr. Funk, Choate made his conduct of the case a notable triumph. Mr. Godkin's attacks had extended over a number of years. Nevertheless, Choate showed that during all this time Dr. Funk had repeatedly been asked to officiate in Methodist pulpits, that he had been honored by his denomination in other ways, that the Prohibitionists had nominated him for Congress and the Governorship, and that it was not improbable that he would some day receive their nomination for the Presidency. All these honors had come at the time when the attacks by the *Post* had been most intense.

"Now," said Choate to Dr. Funk, "now, sir, will you please make clear to his honor, and to the gentlemen of the jury, just in what manner your character and your relations with your friends and your associates and the public at large have suffered injury from the so-called brutal attacks of my client?" To this challenge Dr. Funk did not know how to reply. In his final address to the jury Choate carried the war into the enemy's territory

with staggering effect. It happened that Dean Farrar's life of Christ had been first brought out here in an authorized edition by E. P. Dutton & Co., and had immediately been pirated by Dr. Funk, although Dutton's had paid the author a substantial sum. "I have never been a doctor of divinity," remarked Choate; "I never expect to be one. I cannot tell, therefore, just how a doctor of divinity feels; but to me, an outsider and a layman, there is something incongruous in the idea of a doctor of divinity going into business for gain and beginning his operations by stealing the Life of his Saviour." Partly because of the lack of evidence of any real injury to Dr. Funk, partly because of Choate's shrewd thrust, the jury's verdict was in favor of Godkin, and the costs were assessed upon Dr. Funk.

The ultimate partial victory for international copyright in March, 1891, just as Congress was ending its session, left the *Evening Post* dissatisfied. It admitted that the law was a triumph for honesty, and that it put an end to the Algerine system of fostering the national intelligence. "But if we said that it was a measure to be proud of, we should be going far beyond the truth. The obligation under which it places the foreign author of having his book 'manufactured' in this country, as a condition of protection for it, is a piece of tariff barbarism which is enough to make one hang one's head." Unfortunately, the manufacturing clause, after thirty years, is still retained in our copyright legislation.

Mr. Towse's promotion from a reportership to the dramatic editorship was no accident, for by training and taste he was admirably fitted for the position. He had been taken regularly to the theater from his eighth birthday, had seen Charles Kean play, and recalls a performance at the old Adelphi in London in April, 1853. As a boy he was a constant and sometimes surreptitious attendant in the pit of the Old Drury, Haymarket, and other theaters. The Haymarket at the time was the recognized home of polite comedy in London, and there Mr. Towse saw admirable performances of Shakespeare,

Sheridan, and Goldsmith, as well as E. A. Sothern as Lord Dundreary before the part had been made the piece of broad buffoonery which it later became in America. The Adelphi was the home of melodrama, well played. But the performances which made the chief impression upon the boy were those of the famous actor-manager Samuel Phelps, who in the fifties and early sixties raised Sadler's Wells Theater, in the shabby and despised suburb of Islington, into a famous shrine of dramatic art, and who later appeared in other London theaters. Phelps is pronounced by Mr. Towse to have been beyond doubt the most versatile actor of the nineteenth century.

The outstanding merits of the London stage of this period lay in the fact that it rested upon the old stock companies, in which the standards of acting were far more uniformly high than those which obtained after the introduction of the star system. The actors and actresses had been reared in a school of hard work, small pay, and rigid insistence upon the difference between a mere performance and a characterization. All had served a long apprenticeship, and gained such a comprehensive knowledge of their craft that they knew how to acquit themselves creditably in comedy, tragedy, or melodrama. Mr. Towse recalls their striking diversity and authority of gesture, their distinction of speech, their easy adaptation of manner to the character, and remarkable power of emotional expression. Versatility was unescapable. At Sadler's Wells, for instance, all Shakespeare's plays except two were produced during Phelps's seventeen years of management, along with the other Elizabethan dramatists, and many plays by later or contemporary authors—Colman, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Knowles, Bulwer, and so on; there being a change of bill at least twice or thrice a week.

When Mr. Towse began to review plays for the *Evening Post* in the early seventies, he found in New York still several very flourishing stock companies, though the theater was rapidly entering upon a transition to the star-

and-circuit system. Their proficiency was like that of the British companies, although, being fewer, they did not supply so many all-round actors. A number of the best of the players had disappeared or were disappearing. James K. Hackett, Junius Brutus Booth, and J. W. Wallack were gone, Edwin Forrest and Charlotte Cushman were meditating their farewells, and Edwin Booth was in a period of temporary eclipse. The speculative manager, almost wholly ignorant of anything about the theater but its money-making possibilities, was beginning to arise and foreshadow the day when he would make the typical New York production one in which one or two fairly able players would be supported by a parcel of supernumeraries.

But the performances at Wallack's in the seventies and eighties were found by Mr. Towse to compare favorably with those given by the Haymarket company in London. He saw John Gilbert in a number of striking characterizations, notably Sir Harcourt Courtly, Sir Peter Teazle, and Sir Anthony Absolute, while Lester Wallack played admirably in other parts; and two other performers of note were Charles and Rose Coghlan. Augustin Daly's company gave many brilliant, if uneven, performances in the late seventies and early eighties, and included a number of players of trained skill: Charles Fisher, Fanny Davenport, John Drew, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Ada Rehan, and others. When "Romeo and Juliet" was presented in 1877, with Adelaide Neilson as Juliet, Mr. Towse gave her at once a place among the very great Juliets. The Union Square Company was almost wholly limited to melodrama, but within that field it was the best in the country, and probably in the world. With it Clara Morris achieved some remarkable successes. In later years Mr. Towse recalls her as playing with Tommaso Salvini, whom he thinks "not only incomparably the greatest actor and artist I have ever seen, but one who has never had an equal, probably, since the days of Garrick."

It is by the standards thus acquired in studying the old

British and American stock companies that Mr. Towse has measured the present-day stage—standards of the utmost severity, which he believes show a steady and lamentable fall in the general level of acting. He has always been ready to admit the high merit of a good many, and the genius of a few, stars; but from the time of Edwin Booth, who encouraged the star system by his failure to insist upon good supporting casts, until to-day, he has condemned the indifference shown to the subordinate rôles. The lack of taste and artistic conscience among most of the managers of our time he equally deplores. His standards of criticism are severe from not only the histrionic and literary standpoints, but from the moral standpoint. Convinced that the theater is one of the most important educational influences, good or bad, within the resources of modern civilization, he insists upon drawing a clear line between inspiring and ennobling plays, and vicious plays. No other critic in England or America has a background of experience approaching Mr. Towse's, and none writes with more responsibility and weight.

Mr. Finck, on the other hand, has had the advantage of finding New York's music improving from decade to decade, until the city is one of the world's greatest music centers. When he joined the *Evening Post,* operatic singers and audiences were divided into two hostile camps, the Italian and German—both accepting the French as allies. Companies which gave German opera sneered at the Italian; companies which, like Mapleson's at the Academy of Music, gave Italian opera, ignored all Germans save those who, like Gluck and Mozart, wrote more or less in the Italian manner. The revolution which erased this narrow hostility was effected, in the main, by the growth of Wagner's popularity among operatic performers until it became irresistible.

From the beginning Mr. Finck was a champion of the German opera which Mapleson systematically slighted. During the summer of 1882 he sent the *Post* from Bayreuth a series of highly interesting letters upon the Wag-

ner performances there. He described old Wagner, almost seventy, as busy half the day overseeing the productions; pleased as a child whenever the effects were especially fine, and once even shouting to Frau Cosima across the whole auditorium, "You see, my dear little wife, that we can get up something together, after all." Mr. Finck poked fun unmercifully at the more florid Italian operas, and assisted greatly in driving pieces like Bellini's "La Sonnambula" from the stage. In October, 1883, he was able to hail the opening of the new Metropolitan, with a company that, including Campanini and Mme. Nilsson, was willing to do full justice to the Germans; and when in the spring of 1887 he reviewed the third season of German opera, he could rejoice that of sixty-two performances Wagner had received thirty-two.

Conservative and dignified though it was, in every direction the *Evening Post* had a marked growth during the eighties and nineties. It found its first sporting editor in Charles Pike Sawyer, who joined the staff in the spring of 1886. It soon had a real estate editor. Its steady expansion led to the abandonment, on Oct. 31, 1887, of the folio shape in which it had always appeared since 1801. The blanket sheet was unmanageable; it could not be stereotyped, so that the printing had to be done direct from the locked type; and it gave too little space. As Godkin said, the change was a contribution to the anti-profanity movement. The sturdiness of the *Post* is evinced by the fact that in occasional years its profits were large, and that for the whole period the balance was decidedly upon the right side of the ledger; from 1881 to 1915, the net profits on the capital invested were about two per cent. a year. This was in spite of the fact that Henry Villard did not expect it to be a money-making business, the fact that its business managers were not aggressive, and the fact that Mr. Godkin's editorial fearlessness and bluntness inevitably made enemies. Near the end of his editorship, Godkin's attacks upon the smallness of the hundred-dollar tariff exemption for travelers returning from abroad involved him in a dispute with

mercantile interests in New York. He made some untactful remarks concerning small tradesmen, and the result was a boycott of the paper, involving most of the department stores, which cost it large sums. Henry Villard accepted this blow in an admirable spirit, and it was determined that it would not be allowed to hamper the management in any of its activities.

Mr. Godkin once said he had never known any other man capable of the generosity Mr. Villard showed with the *Evening Post*. The owner never sought to influence the paper; he rarely entered the office unless invited; and he submitted without a word to attacks by the financial editor upon his railway policies. Throughout his life and for years after his death Mrs. Villard, who became the owner, upheld the editors even when Mr. Godkin assailed causes near her heart, like woman suffrage, and made large financial sacrifices to sustain the paper.

Taking its editorial page, its criticism, and its news together, the *Evening Post* of the period under review was quite indispensable to New Yorkers of culture. One was as certain to see it in any home of intelligence and means as he was certain to find a set of Shakespeare. It is interesting to note how our writers have singled it out as an essential piece of furniture in any household of refinement. Edith Wharton shows us old Mr. van der Luyden immersed at his Skuyterscliff mansion in the *Evening Post;* Joseph Hergesheimer lays it beside the study of Beethoven and the Tanagra figurine on Howat Penny's study table. The news was not superabundant, but it was well proportioned and thoroughly reliable. The financial columns were without an equal. The criticism of books, drama, music, and art was the best in the country. The editorial views might seem congenial or repugnant, but one simply had to know what Mr. Godkin was saying.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

HORACE WHITE, ROLLO OGDEN, AND THE "EVENING POST" SINCE 1900

THE editorship of Horace White was a three years' interlude (Jan. 1, 1900-Jan. 31, 1903) between the eighteen years of Godkin, and the equally long editorship of Rollo Ogden. Its outstanding feature was the campaign of 1900, during which the *Evening Post* faced the two major parties in a plague-on-both-your-houses spirit. It was impossible for it to support either McKinley or Bryan. But it did applaud Bryan's anti-imperialist speeches, and from them and the Democratic platform plank on the Philippines it expected the greatest good. "They will put one-half the people of the United States in a high school to learn the principles of free government," wrote Horace White, "as a class learns a lesson by repetition and observation." In other words, believing that the Democratic Party had possessed no definite ideas regarding the Philippines previous to the Kansas City Convention, the *Post* hoped that the campaign would imbue it with a lasting set of principles on the subject. That hope has been justified. After Bryan defined imperialism as the paramount issue, the paper—which knew his opponent would win—more and more implied that a vote for him would be a healthy vote of protest.

The decisiveness of McKinley's victory showed that the people were quite unconvinced of the views of Bryan and the *Evening Post* regarding our Philippine policy. It happened that Carl Schurz had made a tour of the West shortly before the election, speaking against imperialism, and on his return had visited the *Evening Post* confident that Bryan would carry a long list of States there. The day after election Joseph Bucklin Bishop argued in the editorial conference that the *Post* should

treat the result frankly, and abstain from any pretense that the anti-imperialist cause had not been hard hit. The editorial which he wrote harmonized with this view. About noon Schurz came in, eager to learn what the editors thought of the election, and was shocked when he read Bishop's editorial. Towering over the younger man, and shaking his finger in Bishop's face, he declared in his severest tones: "You admit too much—you admit too much!" "Too much what?" demanded the irritated Bishop. "Too much truth?"

But the *Evening Post* of course no more surrendered its position upon the Philippine question than upon the tariff. It took the view that the islands should be freed as soon as a stable government could be erected, and it believed then, as it believes still, that the Republican idea of a stable government is altogether too exacting. That American troops should be sent to the other side of the world to impose American rule upon an unwilling people seemed to it horrible. Horace White warmly approved of President McKinley's and John Hay's liberal attitude toward China in the Boxer troubles, and their insistence upon the open door and Chinese integrity. The same liberal principles seemed to him to condemn the employment of a hundred thousand men and a hundred million dollars a year to subjugate the Filipinos; give them a definite promise of independence, he held, and the fighting might stop.

When Mr. White resigned, in accordance with his original intention of remaining editor but a short period, it was a foregone conclusion that his successor would be Mr. Ogden. A power in the *Evening Post* office since he entered it in 1891, Mr. Ogden had come to take a leading share in the guidance of policy and the writing of the important editorials. Of his long, exceedingly able, and fruitful editorship, one comparable only with Godkin's and Bryant's in the history of the paper, it is too soon to write in detail. But its main outlines may be roughly indicated.

In national politics the *Evening Post* continued inde-

pendent, with the leaning towards the Democratic Party which its low-tariff and anti-imperialist tenets naturally gave it. The only occasions since 1884 when it has not supported the Democratic ticket are the three occasions on which Bryan ran. In 1904 it was with Parker against Roosevelt, and in 1912 and 1916 it was with Wilson. In international affairs it remained the champion of peace and of fair play for the weaker nations, with that special regard for friendship with England which has animated it since 1801. It was always to be found arrayed against the Platt and Barnes machines in State politics, and against Tammany in the city. Upon some large domestic questions its policy changed—it early became an advocate of woman's suffrage, and in due time a supporter of national prohibition; while upon other domestic questions, as the negro question, it grew much more aggressive and insistent.

Much of the energy with which the *Evening Post* opposed Roosevelt in 1904 was due to its hot indignation over the steps by which, the previous fall, he had gained a right of way for the Panama Canal by hastening to confirm the separation of Panama from Colombia. Mr. Ogden's attacks upon that high-handed act were stinging. Whether or not American agents had intrigued to bring about Panama's secession, the *Evening Post* thought it shameful, in view of our protests in the Civil War against European recognition of the Confederacy, to be so precipitate in recognizing Panama. "Our policy is now the humiliating one of treating a pitifully feeble nation as we should never dream of dealing with even a second-class Power," wrote Mr. Ogden; "of giving a friendly republic a blow in the face without waiting for either explanation or protest; of going far beyond the diplomatic requirements of the situation, and that with indecent haste—and all for what? To aid a struggling people? . . . No, but just for a handful of silver, just for a commercial advantage. . . ." On one occasion he published as an editorial, without comment, the Bible passage relating to Naboth's vineyard.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY C. C. LANE DONALD SCOTT
HENRY SEIDEL CANBY SIMEON STRUNSKY ARTHUR POUND
FRANZ SCHNEIDER ROYAL J. DAVIS ALLAN NEVINS CHARLES McD. PUCKETTE
W. O. SCROGGS EDWIN F. GAY

EDITORIAL COUNCIL, 1922.

Toward the seven years of Roosevelt's Presidency the attitude of the *Evening Post* had to be a constant alternation of hostility and friendliness. It disliked his love of excitement and sensation, but liked his energy. It attacked his demands for a big army and navy, but admired his brilliant conclusion of peace between Russia and Japan. It believed him indifferent to constitutional and legal methods, censuring his tendency to ride rough-shod over Congress and curse the courts; but it valued his ability to get things done, and recognized the immense constructive achievement of his administration—his work for conservation and irrigation, his railway rate legislation, his pursuit of land thieves, postal thieves, and rebate-granting railways, his successful fight in the Northern Securities case. Above all, it recognized in him an awakener of the national conscience:

> A great upheaval of moral sentiment took place during his administration. He was not the sole cause of it, but he utilized it and furthered it mightily. An account of stewardship of the rich was vigorously demanded. Business dishonesty was held up to abhorrence. Corporation rottenness was probed. All this, in spite of excesses of denunciation and legislation, was highly salutary. It was full time that people who had been mismanaging corporations and exploiting the public were called sharply to book. . . . The quickening of the national conscience, the rousing of a people long dead in trespasses and sins, with such concrete results as the reform of the insurance companies and the restrictions upon predatory public service corporations, is a service the value of which can scarcely be overlooked. (March, 1909.)

Having been outraged by the McKinley tariff and done its best to further the political revolt which that measure produced, having been equally denunciatory of the Dingley tariff, the *Evening Post* hoped in 1909 for a genuine revision downward. Throughout the campaign of 1908 it had regretted the lukewarmness of Taft's utterances on this subject. The day after his election Mr. Ogden gave him a grave warning, which now appears as a prophecy justified:

To Mr. Taft we look for the fulfillment of those solemn promises—particularly for reform of the tariff—to which he and his party are committed. Notwithstanding the returns from the polls, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the recklessness and extravagance which have been encouraged by twelve years of unbroken Republican ascendency. . . . More menacing yet has been the open alliance between the protected manufacturers and the Republican politicians for the exploitation of the farmers and the vast mass of consumers. It is not conceivable that this sinister partnership can continue as in the past. The new and radical element which is gaining control of the Republican organization in the west will fight the stolid stand-patters like Aldrich and Cannon, and it may be set down as a certainty that if Mr. Taft does not join with them in the task of setting the Republican house in order and in casting the money-changers out of the temple, some man of foresight and power will come forward to wage the battle in behalf of the people. The great cause will produce the champion, as it produced Lincoln, and later Cleveland.

The Taft administration was but a month old when the *Evening Post* warned it again that the Payne-Aldrich bill contained provisions that would drive it from power unless the President intervened vigorously to remove them. When Dolliver led the attack of the West upon the tricks and robberies of the bill, charging that hoggish manufacturers had obtained permission from Aldrich to write their own tariff clauses, the editors rejoiced that never before had the public been so awake to greed and dishonesty of protection. When it found that its appeals to Taft to take action were in vain, it was totally disgusted with the President. His Winona speech it thought indefensible. Like the rest of the country, it soon discovered that he had marked deficiencies for his great office. In its view, Taft was wrong in the Ballinger affair, and in his initial advocacy of the remission of Panama tolls. He was not merely a poor politician, in the sense that he could not keep an effective party following, but he lacked foresight and energy. "He has shown himself devoid of the higher imagination in public affairs, too little prescient, without the touch of quick sympathy and popular quality which would have enabled him to take

arms against a sea of troubles," wrote Mr. Ogden as the administration ended.

Yet the *Evening Post* did not believe that Taft's administration was the black betrayal and wretched failure which many said in 1912 it was. The country had many services to thank him for, it said, and his reputation would certainly benefit by the lapse of time. As between Taft and Roosevelt in 1912, it decidedly preferred Taft. In an editorial as the year 1911 closed, "A Square Deal for Taft," it accused the former President of hitting below the belt. "Roosevelt is deliberately allowing himself to be used against the President, and allowing it ambiguously, equivocally, and not in the honorable and manly fashion which he has been forever advocating. . . . Why does he not frankly state the grounds of his opposition to Taft?" When Roosevelt did throw his hat into the ring, the editors deemed his cause in many respects weak. They felt that his denunciation of Taft was malignantly overdone. Recognizing many fine qualities in the Progressive movement, they believed that no new party could come into being without some one compelling moral or economic issue; that a program of all the virtues might be attractive, but did not afford a sound political basis, at least when coupled with the fortunes of an ambitious self-seeker. Parts of the Roosevelt program, notably his proposal for the recall of judicial decisions, and his plan for regulating the trusts by commission, struck the *Post* as thoroughly unsound.

Supporting Woodrow Wilson throughout the 1912 campaign, the *Evening Post* also supported almost all the measures of his first administration. The Federal Reserve Act and the Underwood tariff it hailed as reforms of the first magnitude. The various acts for the better use and protection of our national domain met its approval. While several influential New York newspapers attacked Wilson's policy of "watchful waiting" in Mexican affairs, the *Post* held it both wise and courageous, and regretted only the temporary interruption of it by our attack upon Vera Cruz. The editors welcomed the Jones

Act for a larger measure of Philippine autonomy, thought well of Bryan's "cooling-off treaties," and were grateful for the President's veto of the literacy test bill. Indeed, the paper's support would have been unhesitatingly given to President Wilson at the beginning of the campaign of 1916 had his opponent been a less able man than Hughes, and had it not been deeply offended that midsummer by the surrender of the President and Congress to the threat of a great railway strike, and their enactment of the eight-hour day law. As it was, shortly before November 1 the *Evening Post* came out for Wilson's reëlection.

The opening of the Great War was a stunning surprise to the *Evening Post*, as to all America. But it was less completely taken unawares than were some papers which had failed to watch minutely the drift of affairs in Europe. On July 27, in an editorial analyzing the bellicose contents of a number of German and Austrian papers—the Hamburg *Fremdenblatt*, the *Deutsches Volksblatt*, the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, the *Reichspost*, and the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna—it gave a remarkably accurate view, under the title "War Madness," of what was going on under the surface in Europe. When Germany entered Belgium its condemnation was instant. "By this action Germany has shown herself ready to lift an outlaw hand against the whole of Western Europe." The paper did not know whether Germany directly caused and desired the war; but it believed that she indirectly caused it, and that she failed to prevent it when she might easily have done so. Before fighting had fairly commenced it ventured upon a prophecy which the fate of three thrones has fully justified:

> The human mind cannot yet begin to grasp the consequences. One of them, however, seems plainly written in the book of the future. It is that, after this most awful and most wicked of all wars is over, the power of life and death over millions of men, the right to decree the ruin of industry and commerce and finance, with untold human misery stalking through the land like a plague, will be taken away from three men. No safe prediction of actual results of battle can be made. Dynasties may crumble

before all is done, empires change their form of government. But whatever happens, Europe—humanity—will not settle back into a position enabling three Emperors to give, on their individual choice or whim, the signal for destruction and massacre.

The whole course of the war only confirmed the *Evening Post's* original view that the side of right and justice was the Allied side. When the *Lusitania* was sunk, Mr. Ogden's indictment of "The Outlaw German Government" was one of the most stirring editorials that ever appeared in the *Evening Post* or *Nation;* an editorial which asked the American people to show themselves "too firmly planted on right to be hysterical, and too determined on obtaining justice to bluster," but which expressed confidence that the true and righteous judgments of the Lord would yet be visited upon the German war leaders. When President Wilson asked the American people to be neutral in thought and word, the *Evening Post* declared that our moral sentiment could not be neutral—that it must be with England and France. The Allied infringements upon our rights in the enforcement of the blockade it attacked, but it constantly emphasized the fact that Germany's violations of international law were far graver, in that they affected life and liberty, not merely property.

Long hoping that American participation in the war could be honorably avoided, the *Evening Post* did not want peace at any price. It regarded war as a lesser calamity than the defeat of the Allies, or than supine submission to Germany's unrestricted submarine activity. When that activity was announced it was plain that we should soon be involved in the conflict, and the editors followed Mr. Wilson's course with general, if not perfect, approval, in the difficult days of the crisis. The President's address to Congress asking for a declaration of war was warmly praised by the *Evening Post,* as placing our national motives and objects upon the most elevated plane. "All told," it said on April 3, "Americans may take satisfaction in the fact that they enter the war only after the display of the greatest patience by the govern-

ment, only after grievous and repeated wrongs, and upon the highest possible grounds. There can be no doubt that the country will respond instantly to the President's leadership." The *Evening Post* was not for restricted, but complete participation in the conflict. It early took issue with the administration and with dominant public sentiment in opposing the raising of the army by draft, holding that any appearance of forced military service was un-American, that a volunteer army would show a superior spirit, and that while conscription might become necessary later, it should be postponed until our traditional method of recruiting failed to bring enough men. But the *Evening Post* accepted the draft loyally, and gave its workings the cordial praise they deserved. From the beginning of the war it looked forward eagerly to the establishment of a world organization to preserve international peace everywhere; and in 1919 and 1920 it was among the staunchest advocates of the League of Nations.

Mr. Ogden had the assistance throughout his editorship of a staff as able as that which Mr. Godkin had gathered about him. Frank Jewett Mather, jr., served as an editorial writer from 1900 to the close of 1906, and as he says, gradually specialized in writing upon European politics and art criticism. Oswald Garrison Villard, son of Henry Villard, was called into the office from the *Philadelphia Press* in 1897, and remained one of the most active of the editorial writers until 1917. A brilliant young man from Wisconsin, Philip L. Allen, whose premature death was a loss to journalism, advanced rung by rung, and was an editorial writer from 1904 to 1908. Simeon Strunsky joined the staff in 1906. Three years later Dr. Fabian Franklin, long professor of mathematics at Johns Hopkins, and from 1895 to 1906 editor of the Baltimore *Sun*, became associate editor; and Royal J. Davis entered the circle in 1910. Paul Elmer More, who was literary editor of the *Evening Post* after 1903, and became editor of the *Nation* in 1909, contributed to the editorial page; and there was a considerable list of men

who served for short periods, especially in summers—Stuart P. Sherman, Hutchins Hapgood, Walter B. Pitkin, H. Parker Willis, and others.

As the editorial staff existed when the European War began, its members constituted a group of comprehensive tastes and abilities. Mr. Ogden decided all questions of policy, wrote almost all the leading political editorials, and in addition ranged over a wide field of social and literary comment, treating everything with an incisive, pungent style peculiarly his own. Dr. Franklin wrote upon economic subjects with unfailing sureness, treated educational and scientific topics with the authority of a scholar, and was masterly in exploding any fallacy which for the moment had assumed importance, and the detection of which required the combination of strong common sense and logical subtlety. Mr. Villard was interested in a wide range of humanitarian subjects, having made the *Post,* for example, an outstanding champion of the negro race, while he paid special attention to military and naval affairs. International politics was left very largely to Simeon Strunsky, whose pen was also indispensable in the humorous or satiric treatment of current subjects, and whose knowledge was encyclopædic. Mr. Noyes continued to write regularly upon financial topics, while Mr. Davis—who was also literary editor, 1914-1920—had given special attention to certain phases of politics.

In its news department the *Evening Post* had suffered a heavy blow in 1897, when the city editor, H. J. Wright, became editor of the *Commercial Advertiser,* and took with him Norman Hapgood and Lincoln Steffens. But it quickly recovered, and under a series of managing editors—O. G. Villard, Hammond Lamont, H. J. Learoyd, E. G. Lowry, J. P. Gavit, and the present head, Charles McD. Puckette—has continued steadily to improve. The list of reporters since the beginning of the century contains many names known outside the newspaper world. Among them are Burton J. Hendrick, Norman Duncan, Freeman Tilden, and Lawrence Perry as authors; A. E. Thomas and Bayard Veiller as play-

wrights; George Henry Payne, Ralph Graves, and Arthur Warner as editors; and Rheta Childe Dorr, Walter Arndt, and Robert E. MacAlarney. The Washington correspondence has always maintained a high degree of excellence. The Washington bureau was in charge of Francis E. Leupp from 1889 to 1904, when he was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs; he was succeeded by E. G. Lowry, J. P. Gavit, and then by David Lawrence, two of whose exploits—his "scoop" on Bryan's resignation, and his remarkable prediction of the States which would give Wilson the Presidency in 1916—made a considerable noise in their time. The present correspondents are Mark Sullivan and Harold Phelps Stokes.

The war brought a series of rapid changes in the ownership and management of the *Evening Post*. The financial control of the paper had long been in the hands of Mr. Villard, who for more than fifteen years was president of the company, and had given unremitting attention to the maintenance of its high business standards, as well as to the improvement of its news and other features. At the end of July, 1917, Mr. Villard gave an option for the purchase of his share of the paper to his associates, and a few days later it was announced that Mr. Thomas W. Lamont had bought it; thus terminating the long and public-spirited proprietorship by the Villard family. Friends of the paper must ever be grateful to Mr. Lamont for carrying it through the next few years of excessive wartime costs. He placed Mr. Edwin F. Gay, widely known as the dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration (1908-19), in charge in January, 1920, as president of the Evening Post Company; and two years later, in the first days of 1922, the ownership of the *Post* passed into the hands of a syndicate organized by Mr. Gay. Meanwhile, early in 1920 Mr. Ogden had resigned the editorship, and Mr. Strunsky took charge of the editorial page.

With the marked broadening of the newspaper in the last two years, and the innovations in its form, its readers

are as familiar as they are with the fact that its essential spirit is unaltered. The connection with the *Nation* having ceased in 1917, its editorial page has abandoned the narrow columns and long series of uncaptioned editorial paragraphs which had marked it since 1881. The literary pages passed in 1920 into the hands of Mr. Henry S. Canby, who has made the *Evening Post Literary Review* esteemed from the Atlantic to the Pacific as easily the foremost publication of its kind in America. The volume of news has been greatly increased, fresh departments have been added, illustrations given their proper place, and the appeal of the paper broadened without lowering its standards. In a period not favorable to increase of circulation, that of the *Evening Post* has risen, under Mr. Gay, to the highest point in its history.

But it is the old *Evening Post* still; a newspaper which, with a history one of the longest and richest in American journalism, has from generation to generation preserved the same sterling character. The objects of its conductors may be easily stated. They wish to keep it as public-spirited as the *Evening Post* of Hamilton and Coleman; as ardent in defense of democracy and the oppressed as the *Evening Post* of Leggett; as dignified, elevated, and fearless as the *Evening Post* of Bryant, Bigelow, and Godwin; as keen, intellectual, and aggressive as the *Evening Post* of Godkin and Schurz, Ogden and Horace White; and to add what they can to this noble record.

INDEX

Abolitionists, *E. P.* defends, 145-148
Abyssinia, 505
Adams, Charles, 112
Adams, Charles Follen, contributes, 414
Adams, Charles Francis, Sr., 243, 394, 513
Adams, Henry, 449, 554
Adams, John, 9, 10; death, 89, 90
Adams, J. Q., 82, 124, 131; and "gag" resolution, 170, 182.
Adee, A. A., 414
Advertisements, see *Evening Post*
Advertiser, Boston, 460
Alaska, purchased, 503
Albion, The 355, 407
Alden, H. M., 317, 318
Aldrich, T. B., offered literary editorship, 413, 417
Allston, Washington, 107, 125
Altgeld, J. P., 500, 502, 542
American Citizen, The, 9, 12, 18, 19, 25, 27
"American Flag, The," 104
"American Notes," Dickens's, 223
Anderson, Henry J., 125, 127; on staff, 163
Anderson, Major Robert, 273
Anthon, Prof. Charles, 125
Antietam, Battle of, 294
Apartment houses introduced, 367ff.
Appomattox, 314, 323
Armistad Affair, 172
Army and Navy Journal, The, 318
Arthur, Chester A., 450, 451
Arden, Francis, 23, 109
Arndt, Walter T., 578
Arrears, of subscriptions, 93
Asphalt, *E. P.* advocates, 375
Astor, John Jacob, 18, 46, 106, 131
Astor, William B., 273, 364, 385
Astor House, opened, 162
Astor Library, 364
Astor Place riot, 226
Atlanta captured, 310
Aurora, Philadelphia, 9, 13, 31, 80, 94
Audubon, John J., visits *E. P.*, 191
Australian ballot, advocated, 537

"Ballads and Other Poems" (Longfellow's), 219
Ballinger Affair, 572
Baltimore Convention, in 1844, 176, 177
Baltimore and Ohio Railroad opened, 78
Bancroft, George, 178, 191, 215, 329, 339
Bandelier, A. F., contributes, 527, 554
Banks, N. P., 251, 321
Barker, Jacob, 100
Barnard, Frederick, 341
Barnard, Judge, 536
Barnburners, *E. P.* joins, 243
Barney, Hiram, 265, 277
Barnum, P. T., 366
Beecher, Henry Ward, 255, 312, 328, 338; praises *E. P.*, 464
Bellairs, E. G., correspondent, 552, 553
Bellamy, Mrs. Frederick P., quoted, 546
Belmont, August, 304, 485
Bellows, Dr. Henry, 361
Belshazzar's Feast, 464
Benjamin, Judah P., 327
Benjamin, Park, contributes, 325
Bennett, James Gordon, early career, 156; revolutionizes New York journalism, 157ff.; social ostracism of, 160; later mention, 244, 271ff., 286, 326, 537
Bennett, James Gordon, Jr., 511
Benson, Egbert, 54
Benton, Thomas Hart, contributes, 234, 235, 242, 247, 251
Beranger, 240, 241
Bergh, Henry, *E. P.* defends, 375
Berlin Decree, 39
Bernhardt, Sarah, 435
Biddle, Commodore James, 183
Biddle, Nicholas, 153, 356
Bigelow, John, 216; career, 228; character, 228, 229; becomes part owner and editor, 230; political activity, 231; controversy with Sparks, 231-234; obtains Benton's book, 235; business acumen, 236-240; and Sainte-Beuve, 239, 240; Minister to France, 241, 286, 311, 313, 341-343; his "Jamaica," 346; on Bryant's style, 347; as Bryant's associate, 352, 358, 359; as Tilden's friend, 400-405; later mentions, 424, 438, 439
Binns, John, 21, 53
Binney, J. G., 171
Bishop, Joseph Bucklin, joins *E. P.*, 455; and Mugwump campaign, 461; and the fight against Tammany, 481; as associate editor, 526; on election of 1900, 568, 569
Bismarck, 452
Black Friday, 392, 425
Bladensburg, 55
Blaine, James G., 394, 446, 447; *E. P.* attacks, 450; campaign of 1884, 459-466; Secretary of State, 468, 471, 472
Blair, Francis P., 251, 314
Blair, Montgomery, Postmaster-General, 285
Bland Act, *E. P.* attacks, 436
Bland, Richard, silver leader, 499
Blankenburg, Rudolph, writes Schurz, 445
Bleecker, Anthony, 15, 18, 97, 114
Bleecker, Leonard, 18
Bliss & White, 125
Blockade of South, 284, 286
Blunt, Orison, runs for Mayor, 378
Board of Health organized, 371
Boggs, W. G., part owner, employee, 230, 231, 431
Book-reviews, early, 107-111; 1830-1855, 207, 216ff.; 1865-1881, 406-419; 1881-1901, 553-560
Boole, F. I. A., Tammany leader, 378
Booth, Edwin, and star system, 565

Booth, John Wilkes, death, 318
Booth, Junius Brutus, his début, 118; career ends, 564
Boutelle, Representative, Charles A., on Spanish War, 515
Boutwell, George S., as Secretary of Treasury, 392
Bowles, Samuel, 362; and Liberal Republican movement, 394-400
Boyce, S. S., reporter, 319
Boyesen, H. H., contributes, 527
Brace, Charles Loring, 485, 524
"Bracebridge Hall," Irving's, reviewed, 111
Bradford, Gamaliel, contributes, 559
Bradley, Gen. Stephen T., 23
"Bramble, Matthew," contributes, 100
Brevoort, Henry, contributes, 95, 109, 110
Bridges, Robert, on staff, 439
Briggs, James A., on Lincoln at Cooper Union, 260
Bristow, Ex-Gov. Benj. H., trustee, 444
Bronson & Chauncey, 91
Brooklyn, 224, 365; union with New York, 494
Brooks, James and Erastus, found the *Express*, 156; later careers, 262, 271, 304
Brooks, Preston S., assaults Sumner, 252, 359
Brown, Charles Brockden, 15; works reviewed, 109, 110
Brown, John, at Harper's Ferry, 256-258
Brownell, W. C., 449, 554, 558
Bryce, James, 443, 448, 523, 532, 553; as a contributor, 556, 557, 559
Bryan, Wm. J., and campaign of 1896, 500-503; and campaign of 1900, 568, 569; as Secretary of State, 574
Bryant, William Cullen, acquaintance with Coleman, 21-23, 96, 97; comes to New York, 121; associate editor *E. P.*, 122; early labors on *E. P.*, 125-133; becomes editor-in-chief, 134; in Europe, 138; returns in 1836, 163; rescues *E. P.* from failure, 166-169; free speech and free soil, 170-173; in campaign of 1840 and Mexican War, 173-179; travels, 182, 183; buys Roslyn, 190; literary friends, 191; advocates Central Park, 192-201; begins fight for international copyright, 211-216; literary judgments, 216-224; asks Bigelow to join *E. P.*, 230; anti-slavery utterances, 242-266; ardent supporter of Union and emancipation in Civil War, 267-315; mild reconstruction views, 326-337; character as an editor, 338-359; becomes rich, 359-362; influence, 362, 363; and Tweed Ring, 386, 387; in elections of 1872 and 1876, 389-405; death, 420
Bryant, Mrs. W. C., on Bryant's overwork, 179.
Bryant Building, 412
Buckingham, J. T., defends free speech, 148
Budget, executive, 451
Buell, General, 313
Bull Run, battle of, 284, 285, 323; second battle of, 291
Burch, Robert, managing editor, 351, 455
Burnham, Michael, 125, 138
Burns, the slave, 250
Burnside, Gen. Ambrose, 297, 298, 322
Burr, Aaron, 9, 10, 25, 29, 51, 107
Butler, Benj. F., 459, 464

Calhoun, John C., *E. P.* characterizes, 21, 29, 35
Callender, J. T., 12, 20, 36
Cameron, Simon, in Lincoln's Cabinet, 277, 278
Canby, Henry Seidel, 579
Carey, Matthew, on international copyright, 215, 417
Carleton, C. C., 322
Carrier-pigeons, early use of, 82; later use, 161
Carter, James C., 485, 524
Cartoons, first, 86
Cass, Lewis, *E. P.* opposes for President, 243, 247
Censorship, Civil War, 321-323
Central Park, *E. P.* champions, 193-201
Cervera defeated, 553
Chancellorsville, battle of, 298, 322
Charter, agitation for a reform, 205, 206; Tweed charter, 378-388; reform charters, 401, 494
Chase, Salmon P., contributes, 242, 243; in Lincoln's Cabinet, 277, 278; a "radical," 285; corresponds with Bryant, 286, 290; financial policies, 295-297, 313; on reconstruction, 327, 334; for Presidency, 390
Chatham Street chapel, riot at, 145
Chandler, William E., 450
Cheetham, James, 12, 21, 25, 29, 31, 32, 48, 50, 51, 81
Child, Lydia Maria, 294
Chinese question, 451
Choate Joseph H., 440, 527, 561, 562
Cholera epidemic of 1832, 142
"Christmas in 1875," 414
Church, W. C., 318, 369
Civil Rights bill, *E. P.* advocates, 329.
Civil service reform, *E. P.* champions, 391, 393, 405, 436, 451, 466-468, 522, 523, 547
Civil War, 267, 325
Civil War poetry in *E. P.*, 323-325
Clark, E. P., associate editor, 526
Clarkin, Franklin, war correspondent, 552
Clay, Henry, 46, 50, 127; *E. P.* characterizes, 143, 173; "Raleigh letter," 177; Compromise of 1850, 244-247, 454, 537
Cleveland, Grover, on Schurz, 446, 450, 451; *E. P.* supports in 1884, 462-466; as President, 466-468; re-election, 469, 470; and Venezuela affair, 470-475; and silver, 498, 499; and New York *Journal*, 511
Cobb, Howell, 254, 264
Cobbett, William, 13, 104
Cockran, Bourke, and Tammany, 480-495
Coghlan, Charles and Rose, 564
Colden, Cadwallader, 11, 108
Cole, Thomas, 338
Coleman, William, early career, 14-17; becomes editor-in-chief, 17-20; character, 21-24; relations with Hamilton, 25-34; Federalist views, 39-47; methods as editor, 46-51; in War of 1812, 52-62; comments on city affairs, 63-76; and "Croaker" poets, 101-105; dramatic tastes, 112-120; death, 133, 134
Colored Orphan Asylum, burned, 307
Columbian, the New York, 95
Commercial, New York, 128, 246, 252, 342

Commercial, Cincinnati, 390, 462
Commercial Advertiser, New York, 12, 77, 95, 108, 117, 128, 321, 404, 439, 440, 550
Committee of Seventy, in Tweed Affair, 388
Concrete sidewalks, first in New York, 365
Conkling, Roscoe, 450, 451
Connolly, Richard B., in Tweed Affair, 376-388
Conservation, 448
Constitution, frigate, 52, 53, 83
Cooke, George Frederick, 115
Cooper, Fenimore, visits *E. P.*, 190, 191; last years, 206, 215, 216; *E. P.* on "Deerslayer," 222; contributes to *E. P.*, 223, 224, 225; mentioned, 338
Cooper, Peter, 524, 539
Copyright, international, *E. P.* contends for, 209, 212-216, 417, 418, 560-562
Corbett, Sergeant Boston, contributes, 318
Courier and Enquirer, New York, 137, 146; assails *E. P.*, 147, 154; news enterprise, 155; attacks Cooper, 223; supports Fremont, 251; absorbed by *World*, 270
Courrier des Etats Unis, on Dickens, 211; on secession, 272; on emancipation, 295; a "copperhead" paper, 301
Cox, Dr. F. F., abolitionist, 145
Cox, Gen. Jacob, 393, 394, 399, 559.
Cox, Kenyon, contributes, 554
Cranch, Christopher Pearse, contributes, 189, 324
Crawford, W. C., supported in 1824, 124
Crime in New York in 1839, 192
Crimean War, news of, 189; 504
Crittenden Compromise, 272-274
"Croaker" poems, 100-107
Croker, Richard, 478, 480, 494, 518, 550
Croton Aqueduct, 194, 196, 197
Cruger, Henry, 106
Crystal Palace, 205
Cushing, Caleb, 341
Cushman, Charlotte, benefit for, 339; retires, 564
Cuba, war in, 506-515; *E. P.* opposes annexation of, 515ff.
Curtis, George W., 362, 524
Cutting, R. Fulton, and W. Bayard, 485

Daily Advertiser, New York, 12
Daily Gazette, New York, 12, 76, 93, 94, 95, 104
Daily Graphic, New York, 406.
Daily News, New York, 252; on secession, 271-283; mob threatens, 301; "copperhead," 302ff.; calls war a failure, 312; on reconstruction, 326
Daly, Augustin, his stock company, 564
Dana, Charles A., 326; on impeachment, 331ff., 349, 363; on Tweed Charter, 382; supports Grant, 390; supports Greeley, 399, 434; campaign of 1884, 464ff.; and Cleveland, 466, 469; a Tammany adherent, 476, 485; and free silver, 502; epigrams, 532; lack of principle, 538; character as editor, 546, 547
Dana, R. H., Sr., 121, 123, 162, 166, 216, 223
Dana, R. H., Jr., 339
Danish West Indies, annexation of, 503
Darwin, Charles, Bryce upon, 557
Davenport, Fanny, 564
Davis, Jefferson, 272, 274, 299, 306, 327
Davis, R. B., 109
Davis, Royal J., literary editor, editorial writer, 576, 577
Day, Benjamin H., founds *Sun*, 157.
Day Book, New York, on secession, 271-283; mob threatens, 301
Decatur, Stephen, 86
"Deerslayer, The," reviewed, 222
De Lome, Dupuy, dismissed, 507, 508
Delta, New Orleans, 184, 185
Democratic Review, 224, 229
Dennie, Joseph, 100
Dewey, Chester P., correspondent, 258
Dewey, Orville, 225
Dewey, Admiral George, at Manila, 514
Dicey, A. V., on Godkin, 531; a contributor, 558
Dicey, Edward, on J. G. Bennett, 160
Dickens, Charles, 192, 207; visit in 1842, 209ff.; *E. P.* upon, 223, 353
District of Columbia, emancipation in, 172
Dithmar, Henry, foreman, 342, 343, 354, 422
Dix, John A., 329
Dodge, William E., 374
Dolliver, Senator Jonathan P., 472
Dom Pedro, Emperor, visits *E. P.*, 356
Dorr, Rheta Childe, 578
Douglas, Stephen A., *E. P.* attacks, 247ff.; debate with Lincoln, 258ff.
Downing, A. J., and Central Park, 193, 196
Draft Riots, 300, 305ff.
Drake, Joseph Rodman, 96; contributes "Croaker" poems, 100-107
Drama, in early *E. P.*, 111-119; before Civil War, 226, 227; after Civil War, 421; under J. R. Towse, 562-565
Dred Scott decision, 254ff.
Drew, John, 564
Duane, William, as editor, 12, 21, 23, 31, 50, 51, 94
Du Chaillu, 320
Duncan, Norman, 577
Dunlap, William, 15, 111, 113, 114, 125
Dupont, Admiral S. F., 318
Dwight, Theodore, as Federalist editor, 17, 23, 45, 57, 124

Eacker, George L., fights Hamilton's son, 28
Eggleston, Edward, 412; contributes, 414, 554
Eggleston, George Cary, 348; on Bryant, 354-358; as literary editor, 412-419; on Parke Godwin, 435; resigns, 440
Elevated railways, movement for, 372ff.
Elevators, first, 365
Electoral Commission of 1876, 405
Emancipation, 293-295
Embargo, 42-44, 46
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, lectures reported, 180, 225; *E. P.* upon, 221-223, 339; "Fortune of the Republic," 415
Enquirer, Richmond, 235, 248
Ericsson, John, and *E. P.* press, 237; and Civil War, 286
Erie Railway, early career, 159
Evarts, William M., 229, 334, 338, 339, 428
Evening Post, weekly, begins in 1842, 179
Evening Post, The, see table of contents:
Advertisements in, 72, 73; 91-92, 94, 135, 153, 238, 360, 361, 430, 431, 567
Circulation of, 18, 20, 77, 92, 93, 189,

Evening Post—Continued
237, 238, 268, 326, 359, 360, 361, 474, 530
Finances of, 92-95, 123, 124, 135, 136, 153, 190, 236, 238, 239, 359-362, 426, 427, 433, 566, 567
News pages, 78-90, 125, 179, 180-189, 316-323, 421-426, 546-566
Express, New York, 221, 252, 256; views of secession, 267-283; mob threatens, 301; on reconstruction, 326ff.; 342; in election of 1872, 399
Farragut, David, 314
Fawcett, Edgar, contributes, 414
Federal aid to schools, 451
Fenton, R. E., 397
Fessenden, T. G., 109
Fessenden, W. P., 334
Field, Cyrus W., 464, 524
Field, D. D., 178, 243, 339
Field, Henry M., 364, 524
Fields, James T., 407
Finck, Henry T., 530; on W. P. Garrison, 555; as musical editor, 565, 566
Firemen, New York, 76; in forties and fifties, 202-204
Fisk, James, 392
Fiske, John, 309, 415, 449; contributes, 554
Five Points in New York history, 146, 370
Flagg, Azariah, as controller, 205
Foote, Ebenezer, 16, 31, 32
Ford, W. C., 527
Forrest, Edwin, début, 118; Leggett upon, 225; Parke Godwin quarrels with, 226, 227; retires, 564
Fort Dearborn massacre, 83
Fort Donelson, 309
Fourteenth Amendment, 330
Fowler, Senator G. S., 334, 335
Francis, Dr. John W., 24
Franco-Prussian War, 504
Franklin, Dr. Fabian, assistant editor, 576, 577
Fraser's Magazine on American Press, 346
Fredericksburg, battle of, 297, 322
Freedmen's Bureau Bill, 329
Freeman's Journal, 301
Free Silver, 425, 446, 469; *E. P.* campaign against, 496-503
Free Soil Party, *E. P.* supports, 243, 244
Fremont, Jessie Benton, 231
Fremont, John C., 231; *E. P.* supports in 1856, 251, 252; defeated, 252; emancipation proclamation, 293
Freneau, Philip, 97
"Friar Lubin," 231
Fugitive Slave Law, 251
Fuller, Margaret, as critic, 215
Fulton, Robert, 73, 74, 78
Funk, Dr. I. K., and international copyright, 561, 562
Furness, H. H., contributes, 554
Furness, W. H., 341

Galaxy, The, 318, 369
Gallatin, Albert, 37, 46
Gannett, Henry, contributes, 554
Garfield, James A., *E. P.* supports for President, 436, 437; mentioned, 440; 450
Garrison, W. L., 145
Garrison, W. P., literary editor, 441, 447, 458, 530; character and work, 554-556
Gavit, John Palmer, 577, 578
Gay, Edwin F., President Evening Post Company, 578, 579
Gay, Sidney Howard, managing editor, 413, 424
Genung, C. H., contributes, 559
George, Henry, political career, 478, 479, 494, 533
Germany, Schurz on, 452; Franco-Prussian War, 504; war with, 574-576
Gettysburg, battle of, 298-300, 322
Ghent, treaty of, 58, 59, 87
Gibbons, John S., writes war-song, 325
Giddings, Joshua, 243
Gilbert, Mrs. C. H., 564
Gilbert, John, 564
Gilder, Richard Watson, 411
Gildersleeve, Basil, contributes, 559
Gilman, Daniel Coit, 492, 493
Gilroy, Thomas F., Tammany career of, 480-495 *passim*.
Gladden, Washington, and reading notices, 430
Gladstone, W. E., 523, 557
Goelet, Peter and R. H., 364
Godkin, E. L., Paris correspondent, 318; on reconstruction, 327ff.; and Liberal Republican movement, 394-400; associate editor *E. P.*, 438ff.; career, 442, 443; quarrel with Schurz, 454-457; editor-in-chief, 457, 458; campaign of 1884, 459, 466; and Cleveland's Administration, 466-470; and Venezuela affair, 470-475; war upon Tammany, 476-495; fight against free silver, 496-503; Spanish war and Philippines, 503-518; resignation, 518; character, 519-543; influence, 543-545; ideal of a newspaper, 546-550; dispute with merchants, 566, 567
Goff, John W., and city reform, 487ff.
Godwin, Parke, on Bryant, 125; on J. G. Bennett, 161; joins *E. P.*, 163, 164, 167, 168; as Bryant's associate, 179; on Bryant's habits, 190, 191; lectures, 225, 229; buys share of *E. P.*, 238, 291, 313, 339, 343; on Bryant as editor, 349, 352, 353, 354; newspaper profits, 359; 392; in Hayes-Tilden campaign, 403ff.; 413; trustee of *E. P.*, 420; editor-in-chief, 420, 426-437; early career, 434, 435; sells *E. P.*, 438-440, 448
Gordon, "Chinese," 505
Gould, Jay, 392, 439, 453, 464, 465
Grace, W. R., runs for Mayor, 477
Gracie, Archibald, a founder, 17, 18, 63
Graham's Magazine, 218
Granger movement, 436
Grant, Hugh J., and city politics, 477-495 *passim*.
Grant, U. S., 299, 302; *E. P.* praises military career, 309ff.; 313, 319; *E. P.* supports in 1868, 389; attacks, 389-395; for re-election, 395-400; 450
Graves, Ralph, 578
Greeley, Horace, founds *Tribune*, 160; lectures, 225, 261; on secession, 270, 271, 273; on Bull Run, 285, 322; on reconstruction, 326, 329, 334; debates with Raymond, 345, 349; influence, 362; on Tweed Charter, 382, 390; candidate for Presidency, 395-400; Watterson upon, 435; mentioned, 538
Green, Andrew H., and Tweed Ring, 388, 401
Greenback movement, 425
Grimes, James W., 334, 335
Griswold, R. W., 217
Gunnarius, F. W., 414

Hackett, James, 106, 107, 119
Hackett, James K., 564
Hackett, Mrs. John, 355, 356
Hadley, A. T., contributes, 527
Hagerman, H. B., 48, 49
Hale, David, 155
Hall, A. Oakey, and Tweed Ring, 378-388
Hall, Capt. Basil, *E. P.* defends, 207, 208
Hallam, Henry, on Sparks, 232
Halleck, FitzGreene, 96, 97; "Croaker" poems, 100-107, 108, 216, 338
Hallock, Gerard, 271, 279, 301
Halstead, Murat, 390, 546
Hamilton, Alexander, in campaign of 1800, 9-11; interest in press, 12-15; befriends Coleman, 14-17; helps found *E. P.*, 17-19; helps conduct *E. P.*, 25-34; deprecates attack on Jefferson, 36; death, 30.
Hamilton, Philip, killed in duel, 28
Hammond, Charles, defends free speech, 148
Hampton Roads Conference, 314
Hancock, Winfield S., for Presidency, 437
Hapgood, Isabel, contributes, 560
Hapgood, Hutchins, 577
Hapgood, Norman, reporter, 527, 528, 550, 552, 577
Harper, Mayor James, 202
Harpers, publishers, 125, 219, 417
Harper's Weekly, on reconstruction, 327ff.; on Greeley, 399; on Mugwump movement, 460; on the "New Tammany," 479, 480
Harris, Joel Chandler, 554
Harrison, W. H., *E. P.* attacks, 173, 174
Harrison, Benjamin, 468
Harte, Bret, on staff, 414
Hartford Convention, 57, 58
Harvey, W. H., 497ff.
Haswell, Chas. H., on Central Park, 193
Havemeyer, Mayor, 401
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *E. P.* upon, 221; upon Bryant, 358
Hay, John, 407, 532, 569
Hayes, Rutherford B., 362; *E. P.* supports, 402-405; reads *E. P.*, 454; *Nation* on, 459
Hearth and Home, 412, 414
Headley, J. T., 217
Headlines, Civil War, 323
Heilprin, Angelo, 554
Heilprin, Michael, 555, 556
Henderson, Isaac, joins *E. P.*, 237, 238, 340; Bryant's loyalty to, 353; grows rich, 359; quarrels with Nordhoff, 385; in Hayes-Tilden campaign, 403-405, 411; builds Bryant building, 412, 420; resigns as publisher, 420; struggle with Parke Godwin, 426-437; Civil War charges against, 427, 428; character, 427; sells *E. P.*, 439, 440
Henderson, Isaac, Jr., 420, 426
Henderson, Senator John B., 334-337
Hendrick, Burton J., 577
Hendricks, M. M., 364
Herald (weekly edition of *E. P.*), 20, 30, 93
Herald, New York, founded, 157; early character, 158ff.; pro-slavery, 171; news enterprise, 184, 188; supports Taylor, 244, 256; secession views, 267-283; attacks Lincoln, 286; and Stanton, 290; and Lincoln's Cabinet, 292; on emancipation, 295ff.; mob threatens, 301; on draft, 305; on Draft Riots, 309; and censorship, 321; war maps, 323; on reconstruction, 326-337, 346, 360; advertising in 1865, 361; 458; on Spanish War, 511
Hergesheimer, Joseph, 567
Hewitt, Abram S., 478, 479
"Hiawatha" reviewed, 220
Hildreth, Richard, 346
Hill, David B., 468, 469, 544
Hoar, Gen. Ebenezer, 393
Hobson, R. P., 514
Hoffman, Ogden, 148
Hogs, in New York, 65, 66
Holmes, O. W., lectures reported, 225; quoted, 315, 339
Holt, Charles, 25, 95
Holt, Henry, on Godkin, 545
Hone, Philip, 18
Hone, Philip, Jr., diary quoted, 139, 152, 356
Hooker, Gen. Joseph, 298, 322
Horse-railways in New York, 192, 372, 373
Hosack, Dr., 95
Housing crisis of 1864-66, 365ff.
Howard, Bronson, on staff, 422
Howe, Timothy, 237
Howe, Julia Ward, tribute to Bryant, 339
Howells, W. D., applies for work, 407; novels reviewed, 417, 557, 558; on Schurz, 448; on Godkin, 476, 513, 522, 543
Hull's surrender, 55, 82, 83
Hunt, Richard M., architect, 368
Huntington, Dr. W. R., 493
"Hyperion," *E. P.* upon, 218

Independent, on reconstruction, 328ff.; and reading notices, 430
Index Expurgatorius, Bryant's, 348
Indian question, 451
Internal improvement system, *E. P.* attacks, 351
Irving, Dr. Peter, 25, 50, 51, 97, 112
Irving, Washington, 97-99, 107; his books criticized, 110, 111, 206; at Dickens dinner, 211; mentioned, 216, 338
Irving, William, 97
Italy, and Abyssinia, 505

James, E. J. contributes, 527
James, Henry, books reviewed, 417, 518, 523, 557, 558
James, William, 545
Jay, John, 16, 54, 62
Jay, William, contributes, 245, 340
Jackson, Andrew, 101; supported for Presidency, 131; administration, 142, 143.
Jackson, H. H., contributes, 325, 410.
Jefferson, Thomas, election of 1800, 10, 27; *E. P.* attacks, 36-43; death, 89, 90
Jerome, Wm. Travers, 487ff.
Jewett, Helen, murder of, 180
Jingoism, Godkin attacks, 470-472, 511ff.
Johnson, Andrew, reconstruction and impeachment, 327-337; *Nation* upon, 459
Job-Printing Office, 236
"Jonathan Oldstyle Papers," 97, 98
Jones's Wood, park scheme for, 194-201
Journal, New York, and Bryan campaign, 502, 503; and Spanish War, 509-515; Godkin upon, 549ff.

Journal of Commerce, New York, 145, 155; pro-slavery, 171; opposes Central Park, 199, 200; supports Buchanan, 252, 256; secession views, 267-283; on emancipation, 295; mob threatens, 301; "copperhead" tendency, 302ff.; on Bryant, 362; on Venezuela affair, 474
Journalism, revolution in New York in thirties, 154ff.
Julian, George W., 453

Kansas, war in, 253, 255ff.
Kansas-Nebraska bill, 247-250.
Kean, Charles, acting reviewed, 116-118, 562
Kelly, Boss John, 477, 478
Kemble, Charles and Fanny, their acting, 225, 226
Kendall, Amos, censors mails, 148; penalizes *E. P.*, 153
Kendall, E. A., 212
Kendall, G. W., reports Mexican War, 184ff.
Kent, Judge William, 340
King, Charles, 95, 152, 156, 291
King, Edward, 415
King, Preston, 243, 247
King, Rufus, 13; contributes, 42, 43, 45, 52, 54, 60, 106, 131
Kingsland, Mayor A. C., 197
Kittredge, George L., contributes, 559
Knickerbocker School, 96, 97
"Knickerbocker History," advertised in *E. P.*, 98, 99
Kossuth, visits America, 206

Labor, 163-165, 540, 542
Labor, Knights of, Godkin attacks, 541, 542
Lamont, Hammond, 577
Lamont, Thomas W., owner of *E. P.*, 578
Lang, John, 12, 104
Lanman, Charles, contributes, 410
Lansing, Chancellor, disappearance of, 162, 163
Lathrop, George Parsons, Boston correspondent, 414, 415
Laugel, Auguste, 558, 560
Lawrence, David, 578
Lea, Henry C., 554, 559
Learned, J. E., managing editor, 527, 549, 550
Learoyd, H. J., 577
Leavitt, Joshua, 145
Ledger, Philadelphia, 362
Lee, General Robert E., 298-300; 323
Lee, General Henry, 53
Leggett, Wm., becomes assistant editor, 134; made acting editor, 138; violent language, 140; character, 140-142; last days and death, 166, 167; dramatic criticism, 225, 346
Lenox, James, 364
Lenox Library, 364
Lenox, Robert, 64, 91
Lesueg, Catherine, 106, 107, 115
Leupp, Francis E., Washington correspondent, 578
Levermore, C. H., on J. G. Bennett, 161
Lewis, Charlton M., 385, 397, 421; character and career, 422, 423
Lewis, Morgan, 77, 106
Lexow, Clarence, and city reform, 487ff.
Libel, Godkin on, 548, 549
Liberal Republican Movement, 394-400
Lind, Jenny, 192
Lingan, Gen. James, 53
Linn, Wm. Alexander, city editor, 421, 449, 450, 527, 549, 550
Literary Review, the, 579
Littell's Living Age, on *E. P.*, 340
Loco-foco movement, *E. P.* promotes, 151ff.; vote 169
Lodge, Henry C., 447; as jingo, 471, 472, 496, 497, 502, 504
Log-cabin campaign, disgusts *E. P.*, 173-174
Longfellow, H. W., Bryant's opinion of, 217-220, 225, 408
Lord, Rufus M., 364
Lorrilard, Peter, 364
Lossing, B. J., contributes, 414
Lotteries, hostility of *E. P.* to, 71, 72, 132
Louisiana Purchase, *E. P.* upon, 37, 38
Lounsbury, T. R., 559
Lovejoy, Elijah P., murder of, 171
Low, Seth, 494
Lowell, J. R., on Bryant, 217; Bryant's opinion of, 220, 221; mentioned, 339, 389, 442, 448, 469, 521, 523
Lowry, E. G., 577, 578
"Lucius Crassus," letters of, 27
Ludlow, Rev. Mr., 145, 146
Lusitania, sinking of, 575

MacAlarney, Robert E., 578
Macready, W. C., acting reviewed, 118, 119; riot, 226
MacVeagh, Wayne, congratulates Godkin, 493
Madison, James, attacked, 52-59; *E. P.* supports, 61; his messages, 82, 83
Madison Square, laid out, 192, 195
Mahon, Lord, and Sparks controversy, 233
Mail and Express, New York, 465
Maine, destruction of, 508ff.
Managing editorship, creation of, 421
Mapleson, James Henry, 425, 556
Marble, Manton, 302, 312, 382, 390, 435
Marcy, Gov. W. M., 151; assails Leggett, 152
Mario, Jessie White, 342, 559
Mark Twain, on Schurz, 447
Marryat, Capt., Frederick, *E. P.* criticizes, 208
Marshall, John, *E. P.* attacks, 152
Martineau, Harriet, Bryant's opinion of, 208, 212
"Martin Chuzzlewit," 223
Mason, Charles, edits *E. P.*, 153, 163
Mather, Frank Jewett, Jr., 576
Matthews, Brander, contributes, 554
Maverick, Augustus, 425
Maynard, J. H., 467
Maxwell, Wm. H., heads schools, 492
McKinley, William, and free silver campaign, 499-503; and Spanish War, 505-515, 523; and Boxer rebellion, 569
Meade, Gen. George Gordon, 299, 300
Means, David M., on staff, 527
Mercantile Advertiser, New York, 93, 94
Mercantile Library, 364
Metropolitan Museum, *E. P.* calls for, 364; enlarged, 493
Meyer, Brantz, correspondent, 317
Mexico, war with, 179, 180; news of war with, 183, 187; intervention under Wilson, 573, 574
Milan Decree, 40
Mill, John Stuart, praises *E. P.*, 341

Minshull, John, 103
Minturn & Barker, 91
Missolonghi, news of, 80, 81
Missouri Compromise, 61
Mitchell, Donald G., 408
Mitchill, Dr. Samuel Latham, 64, 95, 103
Monell, Judge John J., president *Evening Post* Company, 420; inquires into business affairs, 433, 434
Monroe, James, 39
Mooney, William, 79
Moore, Thomas, contributes, 100, 102
Moore, John Bassett, 474
More, Paul Elmer, 576
Morning Chronicle, New York, 25, 76, 77, 92
Morgan, E. P., 251
Morris, Clara, 564
Morris, George P., 100
Morris, Gouverneur, 10; contributes, 27, 31, 45, 54, 108
Morse, S. F. B., invents telegraph, 187-189, 304
Morton, Levi P., 490, 491
Moscow, burning of, 59, 60
Moss, Frank, and city reform, 487ff.
Motley, J. L., dismissed by Grant, 393
Mugwump movement, 459-466
Mullet, Abram B., 375
Mulligan letters, 459-466
Mulberry Court described, 372
Murray, Charles Augustus, *E. P.* defends, 208
Musical criticism, 421, 449, 565, 566

Nadal, E. S., on newspaper reviewing, 415, 416
Napoleonic Wars, 34, 39-44, 59, 60; news of, 87, 88
Napoleon III, 504
Nast, Thomas, 377, 399
National Advocate, New York, 95, 124
National-Zeitung, New York, 302
Nation, New York, on reconstruction, 327ff.; on Liberal Republican Movement, 390-400 *passim*; connected with *E. P.*, 438ff.; political views, 458, 459; influence, 543, 545; separated from *E. P.*, 578
Neilson, Adelaide, 564
Newbern, attack on, 321
Newcomb, Simon, contributes, 527, 554
New England Magazine, criticises Bryant, 137
New Madrid earthquake, 82
"Newspaper waifs," 450
New Orleans, battle of, 84, 85
New York city, description in 1801, 63ff.; hogs, 65, 66; street-cleaning, 67; health, 68-70; morals, 70-72; amusements, 72, 73; transit, 73; coal and gas, 75, 76; police, 76; burials, 76; growth to 1850, 192; parks, 192-201; crime, 201; police, 202; fire department 1840-65, 202-204; street cleaning, 204, 205; corruption in fifties, 205, 206; and Draft Riots, 300ff.; growth after Civil War, 364, 365; housing difficulties, 365-371; health after Civil War, 369-372; rapid transit, 372-375; and the Tweed Ring, 376-388; municipal misgovernment and reform, 476-495; improvements under Mayor Strong, 492, 493; creation of Greater New York, 494.
New York Review, 122, 229
Nichols, Major George, contributes, 318
Niles, Nathaniel, correspondent, 186, 187
Noah, M. M., 51, 102, 108, 114; joins *Courier and Enquirer*, 155
Nordhoff, Charles, 241, 291; Draft Riots reported by, 306-309; career, 315-317; as managing editor, 317-323; quarrels with Henderson, 385, 421, 429
Northern Securities Case, 571
Norton, Charles Eliot, 340, 449, 458, 513, 518, 522, 543; contributes, 559
Noyes, Alexander Dana, and free silver campaign, 500-503; as financial editor, 553
Nullification, 132, 133

O'Brien, James, 384, 387
O'Conor, Charles, 230, 231
Ogden, Rollo, 503, 523; as associate editor, 526, 527; as editor-in-chief, 569-578; resigns, 578
Ogden, Wm. B., 374
Olmsted, F. L., 523
Olney, Richard B., 472ff.
Opera, first in New York, 119, 120
Opdyke, George, 263, 291, 303, 366
Orange Riot of 1871, 385-387
"Oregon Trail, The" (Parkman's), *E. P.* reviews, 222
O'Reilly, Miles, contributes, 325, 410
Orders in Council, 39, 40; repealed, 54
Osborne, W. H., 265, 310
Osgood, J. R. & Co., 417
Osgood, Samuel, contributes, 410
"Outre-Mer," *E. P.* on, 218

Paine, Robert Treat, 21
Paine, Robert Treat, Jr., 107, 108
Paine, Thomas, 12, 43, 97
Panama, seizure of, 447, 570
Parkhurst Rev. Charles H., 486ff.
Parkman, Francis, 222, 449, 523, 554
Parks, growth of in New York, 192-201
Park Theater, 113, 114
Parsons, Rev. Willard, 372
Parton, James, on J. G. Bennett, 159, 160
Paulding, J. K., 96, 97, 110, 156; contributes, 180; on *E. P.*, 340
Payne-Aldrich Tariff, 572
Payne, George Henry, 578
Peck, Harry Thurston, quoted, 538
Pensions legislation, *E. P.* opposes, 436, 468
Percival, J. G., 111
Perry, Lawrence, 577
Phelps, Wm. Walter, 451, 460-466
Philippines, *E. P.* opposes annexation, 515-518
Picayune, New Orleans, 184, 280
Pierce, Franklin, *E. P.* supports in 1852, 247; attacks, 248, 249
Pierpont, John, 100, 107
Pinckney, Charles, 30
"Pindar, Peter," 99, 102
Pitkin, Walter B., 577
Pittsburgh Landing, battle of, 318
Platt, T. C., 490, 491, 494, 502, 509, 516, 518
Poe, E. A., visits *E. P.*, 190; 216; *E. P.* upon, 221, 497, 418
Police, New York, 76; in forties, 201, 203; under Tammany, 1885-1895, 487-490

Polk, James K., *E. P.* supports, 172, 173, 177, 178; *E. P.* attacks, 244
Pope, Gen. John, 290, 291, 302
Popular Science Monthly, 369
Populists, 469
Port Royal, capture of, 318
Post, Detroit, 445
Postage, cheaper, *E. P.* advocates, 351
Potter, Bishop H. C., 485, 494, 516, 524
Powderly, T. V., and Knights of Labor, 536
President and *Little Belt*, 41
Press, Philadelphia, 462
Prize-fights, 449
Prime, Nathaniel, 106
Prospect Park, 365, 366
Public Advertiser, New York, 50, 76, 77
Public Library, *E. P.* asks for consolidated, 364, 365
Puckette, Charles McD., 577
Putnam, George Haven, 560
Putnam, G. P., 368
Putnam's, 417
Putnam's Magazine, 434

Quay, Matthew S., 502, 516, 537
Queenstown, battle of, 83, 84
"Quince, Peter," reviewed, 109

Randall, S. J., *E. P.* on, 547
Randolph, John, 61, 135
Rapid Transit, 372ff.
Raymond, Henry J., editor of the *Times*, 252, 255, 261, 281, 311, 326, 345, 362, 425
"Reading-Notices," 430, 431
Reclus, Elie, 415, 416
Reconstruction, see Chapter Fourteen
Reed, T. B., 496
Rehan, Ada, 564
Reid, Whitelaw, 326, 411, 532
Repplier, Agnes, contributes, 414
"Representative Men" reviewed, 222
Republican, Springfield, in campaign of 1872, 390-400; in Mugwump movement, 460ff.; and Philippines, 515
Rhett, R. B. 317
Rhinelander, Wm. C., 364
Rhodes, James Ford, quoted, 247, 298, 306, 443
Riardon, W. L., reporter, 550ff.
Riggs, Caleb S., 17
Riis, Jacob, 551
Ripley, George, literary editor the *Tribune*, 216, 347, 406, 407
Ripley, Philip, war correspondent, 318
Robinson, A. G., war correspondent, 552
Roe, E. P., contributes, 414
Rogers, Samuel, contributes, 99
Ropes, John C., contributes, 554, 559
Rose, John C., on staff, 527
Roosevelt, C. V. S., 364
Roosevelt, James, 91
Roosevelt, Theodore, 447; in city politics, 478, 479, 486; Police Commissioner, 492, 551; opinion of *Journal*, 511; runs for Governor, 516; on Quay, 537; *E. P.* opposes in 1904, 570; and Panama, 570; his Presidency, 571; and Taft, 573
Ross, Senator James, 334, 335
Roslyn, Bryant purchases home at, 190; life at, 342, 411
"Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," 465
Russell, Wm. H., war correspondent, 184, 276, 301
Russian literature introduced, 559, 560

Salvini, Tommaso, 564
Soley, J. R., contributes, 554
Society Library, 364
South African War, 505
Southern Literary Messenger, criticizes Bryant, 137; J. R. Thompson edits, 407
Sparks, Jared, Bigelow's controversy with, 231-234
Spain, war with, 506-515
Specie resumption, *E. P.* advocates, 391, 392, 436
Speculation, *E. P.* attacks era of, 130ff.
Sperry, Watson R., managing editor, 368, 408, 409, 413, 414, 426, 431
Staats-Zeitung, New York, opposes Pierce, 249; on secession, 272-283; a copperhead sheet, 302
Stanton, Secretary, 322, 331-334
Stedman, E. C., 318, 407; contributes, 410, 411, 414
Steffens, Lincoln, reporter, 529, 530, 550ff., 577
Stephen, Leslie, contributes, 558
Stephens, Alexander H., 314
Stephens, John L., 191, 214
Stewart, Alexander, 64
Stockton, Frank R., 408
Stoddard, R. H., contributes, 324, 339, 408, 411, 418
Stoddard, Mrs. R. H., contributes, 325
Stoddard, W. O., contributes, 414
Stone, Col. Wm. L., 108, 126, 128, 404
Straus, Nathan, 490
Street-cleaning, in fifties, 204, 205
Strong, Wm. M., and city reform, 491-493
Strunsky, Simeon, 576-578
Subways, movement for, 372ff
Sub-treasury system, 351
Sumner, Charles, friend of *E. P.*, 231, 242, 285, 286, 340, 393
Sumner, Wm. Graham, contributes, 559
Sun, Baltimore, in Mexican War, 184, 185
Sun, New York, founded, 157; circulation in 1860, 268; in 1865, 326; on reconstruction, 326-337; advertising in 1865, 61; on Tweed Charter, 382; on Greeley, 399; in Mugwump campaign, 464ff.; and Cleveland, 466; and free silver, 502, 503, 535; character as newspaper under Dana, 546-548, 551
Sweeney, Peter B., and Tweed affair, 376-388
Swords, T. and J., 64, 91
Sykes, McCready, quoted, 542
Sagasta, Premier, and Cuban War, 512ff
Safe-deposit vaults, first in New York, 365
Sainte-Beuve contributes to *E. P.*, 239, 240
Salisbury, Lord, and Venezuela affair, 472ff.
"Salmagundi Papers," 97
Sands, Joshua, 11, 17
Sands, Robert, 128, 134
Santiago campaign, 514
Santo Domingo, annexation attempted, 392, 393, 395, 447, 504
Sargent, Winthrop, 109

Sawyer, Charles Pike, sporting editor, 566
Schurz, Carl, 285, 286; and Liberal Republican movement, 394-400; becomes editor-in-chief, 438ff.; career, 441-445; character, 445-448; as editor, 448-457, 463, 485; on Spanish War, 513; on Philippines, 515, 568, 569
Schieffelin, Wm. J., and city reform, 485
Scott, Francis M., 484
Scott, Winfield, in Mexican War, 184-186; *E. P.* opposes for President, 247
Sedgwick, A. G., as managing editor, 423, 424, 431-433; as associate editor, 461, 506, 525, 526.
Sedgwick, Catharine, contributes, 233
Sedgwick, Henry D., 121, 123, 129; helps edit *E. P.*, 153, 164; contributes, 172, 176, 178, 210
"Seaside and Fireside," Longfellow's, reviewed, 219
"Seventh of March Speech," Webster's, 245, 246
Seward, Wm. H., 155, 261-263; in Lincoln's Cabinet, 277, 278; a "conservative," 285, 290, 294
Seymour, Horatio, 304, 306, 334, 390
"Shakespeare Gallery," 112
Sherman Silver Act, 468, 496, 499
Sherman, Stuart P., on staff, 577
Sherman, W. T., 302, 310, 313, 318, 319, 321
Shipping news, 90, 91
Sickles, Gen. Daniel, 392
Sigourney, Mrs., 107
Simms, Wm. Gillmore, 191, 407
Simpson, Manager, 102, 104
"Sketch Book," reviewed, 110
Slocum, Henry W., 374
Smith, Gerrit, 339
Slavery, rise of the question, 145ff., 170ff.; in 1850-1860, 242-283

Taft, William Howard, *E. P.* supports in 1908, 571; his Presidency, 571-573
Tallmadge, Senator Nathaniel P., on free speech, 170
Tappan, Lewis and Arthur, abolitionists, 145, 146, 155
Tammany, 79, 205, 206; and Tweed Affair, 364-388; Godkin's war upon, 476-495
Taney, Chief Justice Roger B., attacked, 254
Tanner, Corporal, 536
Tariff policy of *E. P.*, 34, 129-131, 175, 228, 229, 361, 362, 391, 436, 468-470, 571, 572
Taylor, Gen. Zachary, in Mexican War, 184-186; *E. P.* opposes for President, 243; funeral, 192
Taylor, Bayard, 407, 417
Telegraph introduced, 187-189
Telegraphers' strike of 1883, 455, 456
Tenure of Office Act, *E. P.* opposes, 331-334
Texas, annexation opposed, 175-179
Thayer, William Roscoe, contributes, 414
Thayer, W. S., Washington correspondent, 242, 256, 315, 342
"Thirty Years' View," published in *E. P.*, 235, 250
Thomas, Gen. George H., 314
Thomas, A. E., 577
Thomas, Theodore, 365
Thompson, Captain, in duel with Coleman, 48
Thompson, Jacob, 254
Thompson, John R., literary editor, 353, 354, 407-411
Tilden, Samuel J., friendship with Bigelow, 228-231, 251; opposes Lincoln, 265, 266; a "copperhead," 304; and Tweed Affair, 383-388, 401; as Governor, 401, 402; candidate for Presidency, 402-405, 440
Tillman, Ben, 499, 500
Tilton, Theodore, 328, 334, 412
Times, Brooklyn, on Bryant, 362
Times, New York, supports Fremont, 251, 252; slavery attitude, 255; Seward organ, 260ff.; 264; view of secession, 267-283 *passim*; criticises Lincoln's Cabinet, 292; "niggerhead," 305; and peace, 311; war censorship, 321; circulation in 1865, 326; on reconstruction, 326-337; 360; exposes Tweed, 384-388; supports Grant, 390ff.; attacks Tilden, 401ff.; 422; 431, 436, 454, 458; in Mugwump movement, 460ff.; and Tammany, 486; 535.
"Tom Sawyer" reviewed, 417.
Tompkins, Daniel D., 61
Towse, J. Ranken, on Bryant, 355, 356, 357; on Bryant's imperfect control of *E. P.*, 403; on John R. Thompson, 410; becomes dramatic editor, 421, 426; on Charlton Lewis, 423; on W. G. Boggs, 431; exposes Van Nort, 432, 433; as dramatic editor, 562-565.
Tracy, Gen. B. F., 494
Tribune, New York, founded, 160; supports Zachary Taylor, 173; supports Fremont, 251, 252, 260; for Bates in 1860, 261; 264; views of secession, 267-283; on emancipation, 294; criticises Lincoln, 297; a "niggerhead" sheet, 305; and censorship, 321, 322; on reconstruction, 326-337 *passim*; 342; business history in Civil War, 359, 360; advertising in 1865, 361; takes over Fresh Air Fund, 372; on Tweed Charter, 382; in campaign of 1872, 390ff.; 436, 445; in campaign of 1884, 462-466; and Bryan campaign, 502, 503
Tribune, Chicago, 280, 290, 390, 393, 394, 462
Trollope, Anthony, Bryce upon, 556, 557
Trollope, Mrs., 181; *E. P.* defends, 208, 209
Troup, Robert, 11, 14, 17, 62
Trumbull, Lyman, 285, 334
Trusts, 539
Tupper, Martin F., 223, 355
Tweed, W. M., emerges, 206; his career, 376-388
Typhus in New York, 370ff.
Tyler, President, *E. P.* attacks, 175, 176

"Uncle Tom's Cabin," 249
Union, Brooklyn, 412
Union League Club, 382
Union, Washington, 248
Unions, Trade, defended by *E. P.*, 164, 165
United States Bank, hostility of *E. P.* to, 131, 142, 143, 168
United States Review, 123

Van Buren, John, 247, 250, 339, 362
Van Buren, Martin, on *E. P.* tariff policy, 130; befriends Leggett, 167; *E. P.* supports, 169, 170; on slavery, 172,

Van Buren, Martin—*Continued*
174; renomination asked, 175, 176, 182; supported in 1848, 243, 247
Vanderbilt, Commodore, 94
Vanderbilt, W. H., 336
Van Wyck, Augustus, 516
Van Wyck, Robert, 494, 510
Varick, Richard, 11, 17, 45, 51, 54
Vauxhall, 112
Veiller, Bayard, 577
Venezuela affair, 470-475
Verplanck, Gulian C., 110, 121, 130; disagrees with *E. P.*, 148, 216, 338
Vicksburg, capture of, 300, 309
Victoria, Queen, 181, 182
Villard, Henry, Civil War correspondent, 332; purchases *E. P.*, 438; his career, 440, 441; relations with Schurz, 453, 454, 522; and *E. P.* finances, 566; his unselfishness, 567
Villard, Mrs. Henry, her ownership, 567
Villard, O. G., interviews Bigelow, 237; joins staff, 576; as one of the editors, 577; president of *Evening Post* Company, 578; sells *E. P.*, 578.
"Voices of the Night," *E. P.* on, 218

Wade, Benjamin, and reconstruction, 328; and impeachment, 333ff.
Wadsworth, Gen. James, 286, 289, 304
Wagner, Richard, H. T. Finck upon, 565, 566
Walker's Filibusterers, 503
Wallace, Alfred Russell, contributes, 558
Wallack's Theater, 564
Wallack, James W., 106, 115, 564
Wallack, Lester, 564
Ware, Mrs. William, 179
Waring, Col. George E., 492
War of 1812, *E. P.* opposes, 44ff.; views of, 82-87.
Warner, Arthur, 578
Warner, Charles Dudley, on *E. P.*, 340; on *Nation*, 543
Washburne, Elihu, 392
Waterloo, news of, 89
Watterson, Henry, 35, 434, 435
"We Are Coming, Father Abraham," published by *E. P.*, 325
Webb, James Watson, character as editor, 154, 224
Webster, Daniel, 52, 89; *E. P.* characterizes, 144; tariff stand condemned, 168; on Compromise of 1850, 244-247
Webster, Noah, 13, 14, 20; Dictionary reviewed, 110
Weed, Thurlow, 95, 149, 168, 261, 356, 378, 428
Weeks, Capt. Seaman, 106
Welles, Gideon, contributes, 242; in Lincoln's Cabinet, 277, 278; a "radical," 285; 290; on Henderson, 427, 428
Wellington, Lord, 88, 89
Wells, David A., 391, 394, 399; trustee of *E. P.*, 444; mentioned, 524
Wells, John, friend to Coleman, 15-17, 23, 29, 32, 52, 97, 112, 114
Weyler, in Cuba, 506, 507
Westervelt, Mayor Jacob, opposes Central Park, 199, 200
Westliche Post, St. Louis, 445
Wharton, Edith, 567
Wheaton, Henry, 95
Whiting, James R., 374
Whiting, Newton F., financial editor, 424, 425
Whitman, Walt, on Bryant, 217; contributes, 224
White, Horace, 337; and Liberal Republican movement, 390-400; becomes associate editor, 438ff.; career, 443, 444; trustee of *E. P.*, 444, 461; and war upon Tammany, 481; and fight against free silver, 496-503; 524; editor-in-chief, 568, 569
Whittier, John Greenleaf, Bryant upon, 221, 239; contributes, 414
Wilder, Dr. A. P., Albany correspondent, 346
Wilmot Proviso, *E. P.* supports, 247, 351.
Williams, Walter, 318
Williams, William F., 421, 425, 426
Willis, H. Parker, 577
Willis, N. P., 182, 227
Wilson, Gen. James Grant, 358
Wilson, Woodrow, contributes, 454; *E. P.* supports in 1912 and 1916, 570; his Presidency, 573, 574
Wines, E. C., contributes, 423
Winona Speech, Taft's, 572
Wise, Gov. Henry A., 253, 327
Wolcot, Dr. John, contributes, 99
Wolcott, Oliver, 13, 14; contributes, 27, 31
Wolfe, John D., 364
Wood, Fernando, 275, 301-306
Woodberry, George E., contributes, 554, 559
Woodford, Gen. Stewart L., 515, 524
Woodworth, Samuel, 100, 105, 107
Woolsey, W. W., 11, 17; contributes, 31
World, New York, views of secession, 267-283; attacks Lincoln, 287; and Lincoln's Cabinet, 292; on Emancipation, 295; "copperhead," 301ff.; on draft riots, 308; wants war stopped, 312; on reconstruction, 326-337; attacks Bigelow and Thayer, 346, 356; advertising in 1865, 361; on Bryant, 362; on Tweed Charter, 382; supports Seymour, 390; on Greeley's candidacy, 398-400; on Henry Villard, 453, 454; 465; on Venezuela, 474; and Tammany, 485, 486; and free silver, 502, 503; and Spanish war, 509-515; E. L. Godkin upon, 549ff.
World War, the, 574-576
Wright, Fanny, 126
Wright, H. J., on Godkin, 525-529 *passim*; as city editor, 550ff.; becomes editor of *Commercial Advertiser*, 577
Wright, Silas, 229, 258